What is Faith - and Other Essays

CHARLES J. CALLAN O.P.

HOLY ROSARY PRIORY
LIBRARY
PORTLAND, OREGON

St. Albert's College Library

WHAT IS FAITH

AND OTHER ESSAYS

BY
CHARLES J. CALLAN, O.P.

HOLY ROSARY PRIORY
LIBRARY
PORTLAND, OREGON

St. Albert's College Library

NEW YORK
THE DEVIN-ADAIR COMPANY

Copyright 1926, by
THE DEVIN-ADAIR COMPANY

All rights reserved

Printed in U. S. A.

Nihil Obstat

V. F. O'DANIEL, O.P., S.T.M.

J. A. McHUGH, O.P., S.T.B.

Imprimi Potest

J. R. MEAGHER, O.P., S.T.Lr.

Nihil Obstat

ARTHUR J. SCANLAN, S.T.D.

Censor Librorum

Imprimatur

✠ PATRICK CARDINAL HAYES

Archbishop of New York

New York, ..., 1926

PREFACE

In these days of religious unrest and uncertainty, when faith is hardly more than a matter of opinion, when miracles are denied or disregarded as wholly unnecessary to religion, and when the future life itself is so often considered a question of mere probability, even by teachers of religion, it becomes ever more and more imperative for those who would rescue supernatural religion from degradation to sheer naturalism, to look into, investigate and analyze the elemental and basic principles of Christian belief and hope. It becomes necessary in such conditions and circumstances to endeavor to see what religious faith really means, what it objectively stands for, what it presupposes and requires on the part of the individual; it becomes necessary to reconsider the nature and possibility of miracles and the part they play in establishing and maintaining our belief in God and revelation; it becomes necessary to inquire into the nature and more serious rational claims of the doctrine of future existence beyond the grave. It is with the hope that they may be helpful to these ends that the following chapters are here submitted in book form to the public. If any-

12893

one might be inclined to wonder why the last chapter has been added to a book of this kind, he will readily have an answer upon reflecting, as already indicated in the first chapter of the book, that the philosophy of Immanuel Kant is largely responsible for present-day ideas of religion and faith outside the Church of Rome.

The author wishes to express his grateful acknowledgment to *The Catholic University Bulletin* and to *The Irish Theological Quarterly* for permission to reprint in book form these chapters, which originally appeared in their pages as articles during the years from 1909 to 1914. Frequent requests made by students and professors since their first publication explain the reappearance of these magazine articles now in book form.

C. J. Callan, O.P.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
The Nature and Object of Faith	1
The Subjective Elements of Faith	34
The Nature and Possibilities of Miracles . .	70
The Immortality of the Soul	89
An Examination of Kant's Fundamental Principles	103

WHAT IS FAITH

I

THE NATURE AND OBJECT OF FAITH

MODERN IDEAS ON RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

If there is one thing more than another of which the present age seems in a general way to boast, and to which it inclines to ascribe its culture and progress, it is its freedom—freedom of thought, of speech, of investigation. One can scarcely turn to a book or an article, touching even remotely the progress and advantages of the times, without being reminded that all or most of these benefits are, either directly or indirectly, the outcome and product of liberty. We in America rejoice in our country's freedom; but over and above this, there is a general, world-wide rejoicing in what is deemed a larger and more precious liberty of mind and heart and conscience.

Doubtless the advantages of lawful liberty and its legitimate exercise, like the disadvantages of slavery and undue restraint, are far reaching and vital in their

Ch. Freedom of Authority

effects. But if we pause to reflect for a moment, we shall see that the right and harmonious order of things calls for both liberty and restraint. Neither, without harm, can be given unlimited sway. Liberty without a measure of restraint becomes *license;* and restraint, unless rightly tempered, degenerates into a state of dwarfing bondage. Hence the boasted freedom of our day may, or may not, be productive of good; it may be a source of good in one direction, and of harm in another; it may bring benefits to people of one class, and evils to people of another class; it may ring in the days of temporal plenty, while preparing the years of eternal famine.[1]

As soon, however, as we cease to generalize on this subject—almost as soon as we begin to descend to facts and to inquire into the object and scope of the lauded freedom of thought and investigation which characterizes our age, we find that this freedom is chiefly concerned with religious matters. It is primarily with regard to things of faith that so much unusual liberty is allowed to-day. There is indeed an unwonted freedom of thought and investigation permitted in other fields, such as philosophy, history and the natural sciences, but this, in a measure, is but a consequence and corollary of the freedom of thought which began with the things of faith. The so-called reformers of

[1] Devas, *The Key to the World's Progress,* New York, 1906, Chap. VII.

the sixteenth century are called liberators, because they broke away from the restraint which the Church had imposed on men for the protection of God's revelation to the world. And in liberating themselves from all restrictions in matters of faith, they took the further, and less important step of freedom in all branches of human knowledge that pertained in any way to religion. That the peculiar freedom in thought of to-day respects chiefly, if not solely, questions pertaining to religion is evident from the fact that outside the Catholic Church everyone may believe, and does believe, what he pleases; and further, that a like freedom is not permitted in other matters. To-day everyone is a theologian, it is maintained. Not that everyone has gone through a set course of philosophical and theological study suited to prepare him for the questions of theology, but simply because religion is a vital matter, everyone is interested in it, everyone has thoughts, more or less vague, about God, the soul and a future state of being after death; and hence everyone is equipped to deal with theology—everyone is, indeed, a self-made theologian.[2]

It is remarkable that the great multitudes, who teach and follow this course of reasoning in religious matters, would not think of admitting it in other departments of knowledge. Who would not regard as preposterous the contention that every person of ordi-

[2] A. C. Benson, *The Silent Isle*, Chap. XXXII.

nary intelligence who had given a little thought and reflection to law, or medicine, or science, or history, was therefore an equipped and competent lawyer, or physician, or scientist, or historian? Who would be so foolish as to maintain that no special study and special training are necessary for proficiency in these professions? Surely no one of sound mind would propound a teaching so plainly absurd. This is above all a day of specialists. One can hardly get any hearing at all in scientific circles to-day, unless he be a specialist in the subject concerning which he speaks or writes. All the great departments of human learning are sectioned off, so to say, to men and women, who give up their life and time to their particular study, and who in consequence are considered able to speak with authority in their respective branches, and are listened to with respect.

But why is the attitude of these same persons, zealous specialists in their own lines, so different when there is a question of theology? Why will they not allow that something special in knowledge and discipline is requisite to make a reliable theologian? Are things visible more difficult of understanding than things invisible? Is it harder to gain a knowledge of the creature than of the Creator? Is the world we see and touch and handle deeper in its mysteries and vaster in its extent than God and the spirit world?

It is hardly possible that an unqualified affirmative

reply would be given to these questions, even by those whose whole life and teaching seem an affirmation of them. Put bluntly the questions are too unreasonable to be coldly answered in the affirmative. But whatever might be offered in theory as an explanation, whatever distinctions or evasions might be entered into in order to justify the practical contention that theology alone of all the sciences is the only one in which everybody is a doctor, and can speak with an authority deserving respect, it is clear to everyone who has eyes to see and ears to hear that the drift of modern non-Catholic thought is more and more towards absolute freedom of doctrine and belief in regard to things of faith. Any one may believe what he pleases and teach what he pleases, if the subject is God, the world to come—the truths of faith. No such liberty would be for a moment countenanced or tolerated regarding any other serious subject or branch of learning, but it is perfectly legitimate and to be encouraged when applied to faith. Such, in the main, is the present-day non-Catholic tendency in matters of religion.

This certainly seems to be a very peculiar and very illogical situation. The more one thinks about it, the more one is inclined to believe that there must be some sort of explanation which will at least modify the glaring absurdity of such a position. Yet the facts are there. Men really teach nowadays more than ever before in the world's history that there should be no

restraint or restrictions put upon mankind in regard to the truths of faith which they are to accept.

NON-CATHOLIC NOTIONS OF FAITH

A partial explanation of this peculiar mental attitude of most non-Catholics with respect to theology and the truths of faith is obtained by a consideration of what they understand by faith. What notion have they of faith? What does faith mean to their minds?

Outside the Catholic Church there is, indeed, great confusion as to the real meaning of faith—as to what it requires, what it stands for, what it promises in reward or threatens by way of punishment. To the majority of those without the Church it stands dimly for a kind of emotion or unregulated subjective disposition, the cause of which is now impulse or sentiment, now immanent instincts, now the round of individual experience. "My faith," they tell us, "is my religious experience; I believe what my own reflections on the interior and exterior world—what I have felt and thought and seen in my own life and in the lives of others—have led me to believe." [3]

This was not, however, from the beginning the prevailing Protestant view of faith. The early promoters of the movement of the sixteenth century considered faith as an "intellectual confidence in one's own justi-

[3] Dr. Lyman Abbott, *Outlook*, March 1, 1913, p. 482 ff., also May 3, 1913, p. 20 ff.

fication." Faith alone sufficed, according to the first reformers.[4] But as this conception, when examined, seemed entirely out of harmony with the teachings of Christ and the Apostles, who made charity the life-giving principle of faith, there was an attempt to make the essence of faith, considered as an act, consist in the will. Charity, or love of God, is an act of the will; and therefore faith, which must be quickened by charity, must also be an act of the will. So they reasoned. And since the time of Immanuel Kant, non-Catholics, for the most part, have quite settled down to this view of faith.

Philosophy is at the ground-work of theology—the former pertains to the foundation, the latter is the superstructure. Philosophy is the product of natural reason operating under the light of natural principles; theology is the result of the same natural reason, but proceeding from principles supernaturally revealed. Theology is then, a natural explanation of supernatural truths.[5] It is faith seeking to be understood in a natural way. And hence it is that one's faith and religious convictions will most naturally be influenced by one's philosophical views. Sound philosophy begets sound theology; erroneous philosophy, erroneous theology. Now at the period of religious unrest of which we are speaking, when the effort was being made to decide

[4] Cf. McHugh, O. P., Lutheranism, *Cath. Encycl.*, Vol. IX.
[5] Billuart, *Summa S. Th., Dissert. Proem.*, a. 1.

the character of the Protestant notion of faith, Kant appeared with a philosophical system which seemed peculiarly fitted to give a natural explanation and a rational basis for the religious holdings which were then beginning to obtain in the ranks of heresy, and which in our own day have culminated in the error of Modernism.

Let us see how this is. According to Kantian teaching it is impossible for the human reason to establish or prove even the preambles of faith. The range of reason, or rational knowledge, Kant teaches, is confined within the limits of sensible cognition. All our knowledge is restricted to the data of sensation. Reason is not justified in rising above the realms of phenomena. Consequently, Kant maintained that not only is human reason utterly unable to know the objective worth of the more lofty truths of revelation, such as the Trinity of persons in the Godhead and the Incarnation of the Son of God, but it is likewise impotent to prove the rational foundations or preambles of faith: the existence of God, the immortality of the soul, human liberty, and man's moral responsibility. Thus, while teaching, on the one hand, the impotency of reason to establish these truths, and firmly believing in their objective reality, on the other, Kant had recourse to the will, or *practical reason,* as the only means of insuring their objective validity. Unable to be proved by pure reason, he said, these truths are naturally postulated by our

will. We want them to exist, we yearn for their reality, and hence they *must* exist.[6]

Now this is precisely the notion of faith, which, with the baneful modifications necessarily consequent upon such a doctrine, is now quite commonly entertained outside the Church. We have an inborn desire, we are told, for the Infinite; the heart calls for the existence of certain truths; we cannot *prove* that these truths exist, but the will *demands* their objective reality, and hence they must actually exist and constitute the objects of faith. The authority of God, speaking to the world by the mouth of history; the life and miracles of Christ, as certainly established and as well attested to as are any of the most reliable facts of human history; the voice of the Church, God's oracle, speaking down the ages, are all set aside by current modern thought, as being insufficient warrant for the truths of faith; and the poor, heaving, inconstant human heart is set up instead as the one tribunal of appeal in questions affecting the worship of the Infinite God and man's eternal destiny. Thus does Modernism teach.[7]

That the will plays an important part in the actual eliciting of the act of faith will be shown in a subsequent article; and further, that the universal and constant desires of the human heart have persuading force in establishing the objective reality of those supersen-

[6] Cf. Reinstadler, *Elem. Phil.*, Vol. 1, p. 131 sq.
[7] Cf. Encyclical, *Pascendi Dominici Gregis.*

sible truths whose existence reason *can* demonstrate, nobody ought to deny; but that man's will or heart is the one regulator of God's revelation to mankind, that its desires, for the most part, so vague and inconsistent, should be considered as the guide to the things of faith, the dictator of those truths of the spiritual world on the acceptance of which depends the eternal welfare of human kind, is an extravagance too enormous for serious minds long to entertain.

From this view of faith, so strikingly common today, it is evident that Christianity, in many non-Catholic circles, has become a merely natural form of worship—a prompting of natural instincts, a product of human tendencies. And as these instincts and tendencies are as varied as are the individuals possessing them, it follows that the truths of faith which they are supposed to postulate must also be different, in some way at least, for each individual. This accounts for the unnumbered sects into which Protestantism has dissolved, and for the freedom of thought in religious matters so prevalent and so extolled at the present time. There has been a breaking off of the connection between the beliefs of the day and the ancient faith which was based on a direct revelation of God to man. There is a real divorce between current popular thought and the Christianity of the Gospel. The two are not in harmony, and men have lost sight of the one while becoming engrossed in the other. To modern thought

men have become enslaved, Christianity they have really ceased to know. The Gospel has been rejected because unknown, or because its meaning has been distorted and explained away. The popular Christianity of to-day has lost its right to the name Christian, it has no divine sanction, it is a counterfeit bearing but the old name, it is a faith grounded on subjective dispositions and inclinations, and not on the objective truths of revelation.[8]

But there is one vital aspect of this whole matter which the modern mind has in particular failed to grasp. It mistakes its own deplorable state. It looks with pity or contempt on the orthodox view of religion and faith, forgetting that the loss is all its own. For modern thought has really injured its adherents rather than God; it has wrought no change in God, or in God's revelation to man; it has not altered man's destiny, or done away with his eternal responsibility. For whether one accepts it or not, it still is true that a revelation of objective supernatural truths has been made, and that Christianity, in its proper sense, is a system of worship in conformity with that revelation. Moreover, as this revelation was not made in vain, it still is also true, whether we admit or whether we reject it, that we are under the happy obligation of giving to it the assent of faith. Men may remonstrate and object and seek

[8] Cf. Christianity and Culture, *The Princeton Theol. Review*, Jan. 1913.

signs, but the fact remains that faith in what God has declared is necessary. Faith in God's revelation to mankind is the very basis of the *true* Christian edifice. It is the secret of the Christian life. It is the fountain and source from which well the streams of power and grace that spring up into life everlasting. "Without faith it is impossible to please God," "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be condemned," for faith is the "power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth" (Heb., chap. xi.).

It must be here observed that there are not a few sincere and enlightened Protestants of the more orthodox type who have grown dissatisfied with the present-day conception of faith, seeing that it is so illogical and out of harmony with the teachings of Christ and the Apostles. They feel that they must get back to the old position, to the primitive teaching from which they have strayed. They must return to that kind of faith without which, as the Apostle said, it is impossible to please God. But aside from the positive declarations of the New Testament, they recognize the erroneousness of the modern notion of faith from the manifest relation which exists between God and man. Man is God's creature, the work of God's hands. "He has made us and not we ourselves." And as Creator of man and all things, God enjoys the right of supreme dominion over all, and can exact from each and all

His creatures the homage of their worship. All, in fact, must serve Him; but to man it is given to know the duty of this service, and to be free to render it lovingly and receive the reward of life, or to withhold it impiously and enter into punishment.

These sincere and reflecting minds further recognize that God needs not to consult man or any of His creatures as to the manner in which He shall be served by them. God, it is clear, is quite free to dictate the nature and form of the worship which shall be rendered unto Him. Since, then, as a matter of fact, God has spoken from on high, and His message has been communicated to us through the medium of sacred writings—since revelation is an historical fact, and Almighty God has indeed vouchsafed to men a manifestation of supernatural truths involving a scheme of salvation which, because of the very sublimity of the truths revealed and the dignity of the human destiny to which it invites, stretches far beyond man's highest natural powers of knowing and understanding—since this is the condition in which man has been really placed, there can be no mistake in the feeling that it is all important to get back to that sane and solid faith by which alone these transcendent and imperative truths of revelation can be embraced. As soon as the fact is recognized that God has revealed to the world the manner in which men are to serve Him, that He has made the fulfil-

ment of that manner of service the condition and means by which men are to attain to their supernatural end and lasting perfection, it is at once clear that the Christian's calling is of faith, that his justification and obedient service are of faith, that his progress in good, his perseverance, his happy end and reward are the fruit of that growth which springs from faith.

DEFINITION OF FAITH

It is plain, then, that the faith which alone deserves to be called Christian cannot be grounded on personal impulse or sentiment or inclinations of the human heart and will, but rather on objective truths which God, through revelation, has declared to the world. My faith is not what I would like to believe, or what my nature inclines me to believe, but what God has told me to believe. It is not what *we* have chosen, but what *God* has chosen that constitutes the object of faith.[9]

Hence it follows also, that there is not so much liberty in regard to faith as many would pretend. Like science, history and philosophy, faith too, has its objects, its range, its data beyond which it cannot be rightly exercised.

With so much said, we may now presume to give a clear and accurate definition of Christian faith in the

[9] S. Th. 2-2ae, q. I., a. I.

precise and proper sense of the term. But first it must be noted that faith can be correctly considered under two distinct aspects, namely, it may be regarded as a habit or permanent quality of the soul, or as an act by which this habit or quality is reduced to action. Faith, considered as a habit of the soul, is a supernatural and theological virtue which disposes the mind firmly to assent on divine authority to all things that have been revealed by God. That is to say, the habit of faith is a gift or quality or power infused into the soul by God which disposes the soul, both intellect and will, to give unhesitating assent because of divine authority to all that God has made known to the world through the Scriptures and authentic tradition. As an act it is nothing more than the exercise of this infused gift or power. Faith means, then, first the power to believe, and secondly, the act of believing.

It may be remarked here before going further, that the present treatise is concerned chiefly with faith as it is an act, and not as a habit or virtue of the soul. The habit of faith offers no difficulty at all when once the act is clearly understood. This is true of any habit or virtue, for habits and virtues are simply firm dispositions of the mind and soul, the specific nature and character of which are known and determined by the acts which have caused them or which proceed from them.

THE OBJECT OF FAITH

As faith, then, according to the definitions just given, is an assent of the mind to the truths of revelation on account of the authority of God revealing them, it follows that it is an intellectual and not a volitional act. It proceeds formally from the intellect, even though it be elicited at the command of the will.[10] And in as much as faith is an act of the intellect or knowing faculty, it is a species of knowledge, that is, it implies a necessary relation between itself and its object, the truths of revelation, by which it is determined and specified. For just as habits are specifically determined by their proper acts, so acts in turn receive their specific character from the objects to which they are essentially ordered.[11]

Therefore in order to get a complete and perfect notion of the nature of faith viewed as an act, it is necessary to begin with its object. The importance of this method of procedure is further emphasized by a brief reflection on the essential character of all human knowledge.

Human knowledge may in a general way be divided into two classes: it is either sensitive or intellectual, as it is the result of the operation of a sensitive or of an intellectual faculty. The sensitive faculties deal only

[10] S. Th. *op. cit.*, q. II., a. I, and II.; De Verit., q. XIV., a. 1 ad 3.
[11] S. Th. 1-2ae, q. XVIII., a. II.

with sensible objects—the phenomena of things—while the intellectual faculties have to do with both phenomena and noumena, but primarily with the noumena or underlying, intrinsic nature of objects. Against Subjectivism and Idealism it may be assumed as a fact, sufficiently self-evident as to merit no discussion, that every act of knowledge implies by its very nature an object existing in the external world distinct from the knowing faculty. This is true even of reflex acts, in which the mind turns itself back upon the *picture* it has already drawn of an object outside itself, for likewise in these instances there is a real distinction between the faculty and the mental object, and the mental object must have its origin or foundation in some thing external to the mind. Things exist outside the human mind and independently of it. They do not exist because we think of them, rather we are able to think of them only because they exist. But while it is of the nature of knowledge to bear relation to, and be dependent upon, an object distinct from the knowing faculty, it must further be borne in mind that the objects of science or knowledge are in themselves quite indifferent as to the manner in which they are approached or dealt with by us. Whether we give them our attention or not, whether they be considered in this way or in that, they themselves do not change; and when we turn our thoughts upon them and exercise our minds concerning them, the change which follows is in

us and not in the objects.[12] Consequently, a study of any particular objective reality or collection of realities tends to beget in the mind a knowledge of those realities, and the knowledge thus acquired becomes focused and specified according to the nature of the object or objects which engage the mind's attention and consideration. Thus if God be the object of our thought and study, the knowledge thence resulting is called theological; if we are concerned with the nature and last causes of things natural, our knowledge is philosophical; if the phenomena of the world about us enlist our mental efforts, our study is in the sphere of natural science.

Human knowledge, then, is a subjective vital operation, born of the union of faculty and object, and is variously determined according to the nature of the different objects with which the faculty comes into contact. And just as the objects have their own varying kinds and degrees of dignity and excellence, as God is superior to things created, as the supernatural transcends the natural, as cause is nobler than effect, so do the nobility and excellence of the various branches of human science correspondingly differ.[13]

Now it is customary to distinguish a twofold object of any science or branch of human knowledge: first, there is the *material* object (objectum materiale), which embraces in entirety the whole subject-matter of the

[12] Zigliara, *Propaed.*, cap. VI.
[13] Zigliara, *op. cit.*, cap. XIV.

science; and secondly, the *formal* object. This latter is commonly subdivided. It may mean that particular part or phase of the *material* object that is sought and considered primarily and for its own sake, and around which all else in the material object centers (objectum formale quod); or it may be taken to designate the medium, the motive or connecting-link between the known or knowable object and the knowing subject (objectum formale quo).[14] An illustration will make this point clear.

Take the process of sight or ocular vision. Three things, distinct in themselves one from the other, are necessary for actual vision: the eye or faculty capable of seeing the colored visible object, and the light making possible the connection between the eye and its object. Now the *colored object* which the eye perceives is termed the material object (objectum materiale) of vision; and as the formal object "which" (objectum formale quod) was said to be the precise aspect of the material object envisaged by the faculty considering the general object (objectum materiale), *color* becomes the formal object "which" (objectum formale quod); while the *light,* which serves as a medium between the eye and the colored object, is called the formal object "by which" (objectum formale quo) of ocular vision.

With so much said in a general way about the nature of human knowledge and the objects of human science,

[14] Hugon, *Logic,* a. I., n. VI.

St. Albert's College Library

we may now proceed to examine more in detail, through its object, the nature and characteristics of that knowledge which comes from faith.

THE MATERIAL OBJECT OF FAITH

As truth of some kind is the object of all conscious knowledge, and of every knowing faculty, and as faith means the assent of the intellect to the truths of revelation, which, strictly speaking, are "mysteries hidden in God," it may be put down in a general way that the object of faith is the supernatural, that is, that higher world of spiritual truths which is above the essence and requirements of any created nature actual or possible. But because the supernatural, by its very nature, embraces mysteries beyond the reach of unaided reason, it must not thence be inferred that faith of necessity and in every instance respects only those transcendent realities which no created intellect could of itself ever discover. No, for truths within the range of man's natural abilities may indeed be contained in revelation, and thus enter into the object of faith. Therefore, St. Thomas and all theologians have admitted the distinction between absolute and relative mysteries, between the absolutely supernatural, which exceeds all the powers and needs of any and all created intelligences; and the relatively supernatural, which lies beyond the possibilities of this or that individual, or group of individuals. Further evidence of this distinction is given by the fact

that theologians dispute as to the possibility of the same truth being an object of both faith and natural cognition.[15] For example, it is certain that human reason properly instructed and properly disciplined can arrive, by its own innate powers, at a knowledge of the existence and attributes of God. By carefully taking into account the existence and nature of the material universe and cosmic phenomena, seeing that they are contingent, subject to change and dissolution, that they cannot have produced themselves, or be finally dependent upon causes likewise contingent and dependent, the human mind not only can, but must logically conclude the existence of some primary, intelligent, independent first cause, which we call God. And from this knowledge of its existence, the mind can go on to designate the attributes or necessary qualities which this intelligent first cause must possess. Thus that God is, that He is perfect, good, all-wise, omnipotent, and free, are truths ascertainable by human reason rightly instructed and rightly used; but these same truths, for want of education, leisure or opportunities, may be beyond the grasp of many persons, and hence must be accepted by them on faith or cannot be embraced at all. This is what is meant by the relatively supernatural. To this class of truths belong not only God and His attributes, but human liberty, the nature

[15] S. Th. 2-2ae, q. I., a. V.; De Groot, *Sum. Apol.*, ed. 3, q. XXII.; a. II.

of the human soul, its spirituality and immortality, and hence the existence of a future life, future reward and punishment—in short, all those supersensible truths and divine realities which the mind of man at its best is able to know, but which without special helps and means the majority could not attain to. And as a correct and ready knowledge of these truths concerns intimately the eternal welfare of each individual, it is plain that, for the majority, who have neither time, nor the qualifications necessary for their private investigation and discovery, a revelation of them is a moral necessity. Thus it is that there exists a whole realm of religious truths within the absolute physical power of the human mind, but which because of obstacles consequent upon our present state, cannot be accepted easily and without error by men in general, except as objects of faith and revelation.[16]

Therefore, although it is the unanimous teaching of theologians that only absolutely supernatural truths, such as the Trinity, the Incarnation, Original Sin, Grace, the Sacramental System, the Christian Priesthood, and the Life of Eternal Glory hereafter, are the primary and proper objects of the supernatural act and virtue of faith, it is nevertheless correct to say that faith embraces as its material and extensive object whatever is contained in the revelation made by God to man, be the content of this revelation absolute or only

[16] S. Th. 1 p., q. I., a. I.

relative mysteries.[17] And not only does this mean the explicit declarations which God has made to us through the medium of Sacred Scripture and authentic Tradition, but probably also those truths, called virtual revelations, which are validly deduced from certain premises, one of which is formally and explicitly revealed, and the others known by reason. For example, it is a fact of explicit revelation that the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity became man, that Christ was at once true God and true man. This we may take as our major premise. As a minor premise, let us take the naturally certain proposition that every true human being is possessed of risibility or the powers of laughing. From these premises we conclude that Christ, true God and true man, was like ourselves and all men capable of laughter. This illustrates what is termed by theologians a *theological conclusion;* and while it is disputed whether such conclusions are the objects of faith before they are defined by the Church, all admit that they are legitimate objects of infallibility, and hence by definition become, without doubt, also objects of faith.[18] It is this failure to recognize the intimate and necessary connection between truths *formally* revealed and *certainly* known, that has led not a few of the adversaries of Catholic theology to scoff at and regard as ridiculous many conclusions to which Catho-

[17] S. Th. 2-2ae, q. I., a. I.

[18] S. Th. 2-2ae, q. XI., a. II.; Joann. a. S. Th., *Cursus Theol.*, q. I., disp. I., a. IV.; De Groot, *op. cit.*, q. IX., a. II.

lics may be required to give the assent of faith, but which are not directly found in the explicit sources of faith. True theology, as before observed, means nothing more than deducing conclusions by the light of human reason from truths directly or indirectly revealed.

THE FORMAL OBJECT OF FAITH

So much with respect to the material object of faith. But as has been said, among all the truths which go to make up the material object of faith, or of any science, there is one primary and central truth around which all the rest are gathered, upon which they depend, and from which they flow, and this is called the formal object "which" (objectum formale quod). In the case of divine faith, then, it is not only required that God be the author of this central object, in the sense that it be contained in revelation, but naturally also that the truth itself be divine in character, as being intimately bound up with the divine Being and related directly to it. And since the divine essence of God Himself is the one truth, which, above all others appertaining to God and appealing to faith, holds the place of chief importance and highest consideration, it is clear that the *First Truth in Being, Prima Veritas in essendo,* is the formal object "which" (Objectum formale quod), of faith.[19] This *Prima Veritas in es-*

[19] S. Th. 2-2ae, qu. I., a. I.

sendo, which is simply the divine essence of God considered in itself, holds the same place among the things of faith, and stands precisely in the same relation to the act and virtue of faith, as does the color in the colored object to sensible vision. It is that which is of primary consideration among all the truths of faith, and is the foundation and reason for considering whatever else belongs to faith.

Again, that which alone is able to make known a thing divine, which alone is fit and adequate to declare it, and act as an intelligent medium between God and His creatures must also be divine in character. No creature is capable of understanding God, no creature is able to probe the divine essence and discover the infinite truths that lie hidden there; much less is any created being able of itself to shadow forth those transcendent mysteries of the Creator. If man is to be made acquainted with the mysterious ways and infinite nature of the Almighty God, it is God alone who must manifest them to him. As light is the only adequate medium which can join the visible object with the faculty of sight, so God Himself must be the light which makes known to the mind of faith the truths to which it is to give its faithful assent. And hence, since it is only the Infinite which is able to bridge over the chasm between Itself and the finite, the motive or formal object "by which" (objectum formale quo) of faith must be the *First Truth in utterance, Prima Veri-*

tas in dicendo, that is, the authority of God Himself speaking to the world and declaring the truths of revelation.[20]

To sum up. Faith embraces as its material, or complete and adequate object, all the truths which constitute the sum total of revelation. Among these various truths the chief, or formal object of divine faith is the essence of God considered in itself, and as the source and basis of all other revealed truths; and the motive or reason which induces the mind to give assent, is the authority of God, implying *infallibility* in knowledge, and *truth* in utterance.

Whether or not the fact of revelation is to be regarded as a partial motive of faith, or only as a condition *sine qua non,* is disputed among theologians. It is at least a condition *sine qua non;* for, that we may believe, it is not sufficient that God be infallible and true, but it is further necessary that He reveal something as an object of faith. Many Thomists with Suarez and others hold that revelation is in itself, a partial motive of faith.[21] In this connection it need only be observed that the authority of God, as far as it is the ground of the assent of faith, can be known naturally and need not necessarily be believed through revelation alone. This will be made clearer later on.

[20] S. Th. 2-2ae, q. I., a. I.; De Verit., q. XIV., a. VIII. ad 16; cf. Conc. Vat., de Fide, can. III., 2.
[21] S. Th. 2-2ae, q. I., a. I.

THE ASSENT OF FAITH IS REASONABLE

The object of faith having been considered under its different aspects, the next step will be to explain briefly the various modes by which objective realities or truths are brought into connection with our minds. This will prepare the way for a better understanding of the manner in which the truths of revelation, as constituting the object of divine faith, are made known to us and are understood by us.

It is evident from what has already been said that intellectual knowledge of whatever kind implies in a general way that the object known is in some manner brought home to the subject or faculty capable of knowing and understanding it; the evidence, or knowableness of the objective reality is in somewise made manifest to the mind apprehending it. So much is necessary. A thing may be ever so real in itself, it may possess the highest degree of intrinsic evidence, and be, consequently, of the utmost intelligibility; and yet unless it become evident to the mind either by reason of its own light or through an adequate medium, the mind will never be in a position to understand it, the mind will have no knowledge of it. This can be clearly exemplified in sensible perception; the sun, for instance, is an object having in itself a plenitude of light and self-evidence, and still to one deprived of the use of sight, this object of extreme perceptibility can never

be realized, at least in a sensible way; one of the necessary elements of sensible perception is wanting, and therefore the object, although so perceivable in itself, cannot be apprehended.

Given then the chief elements which enter into the formation of knowledge, namely, the object capable of being known, and the subject capable of knowing, we can see that the modes of acquiring knowledge may be classified according to the different ways in which these elements become united. It is already clear that the medium or means of connecting the intelligible object with the mind or faculty of understanding, is evidence. To be evident is to be intelligible. Evidence is, as it were, the light of intelligibility shining out from an object and imparting to the mind a notion of its reality. It is a manifestation of a thing as appearing to a knowing faculty and according as this manifestation is direct or indirect, intrinsic or extrinsic, we have various kinds of knowledge. Thus a truth may be in itself so evident as to be clearly intelligible to all who have the use of reason, as soon as it is put into words. Such truths, called self-evident, cannot fail to be understood by anybody; they need neither demonstration nor explanation; to know the signification of their proper terms, is to comprehend their real meaning. For example, that the whole is greater than its part, that two and two equal four, that everything is itself and not something else—all these are self-evident truths, truths

which no one can misunderstand or fail to grasp, provided the terms which express them be understood. Truths of this kind are also called first principles, and from them is drawn another class of truths, which, though they have intrinsic evidence or intelligibility, are not so by and through themselves. They are conclusions deduced from self-evident principles, and as such, enjoy an evidence not proper to themselves, but borrowed, so to say, from their principles. Hence St. Thomas observes that only then is the truth of conclusions perceived as certain when they are resolved into their principles. The principles, self-evident and self-attesting, are the source and fountain whence flow the light and intelligibility of the conclusions inferred from them.

There is another class of truths neither self-evident, nor having, in fact, so far as appears to us, any kind of intrinsic evidence. They do not proceed from any principles which we know, and yet they justly claim the mind's assent, and we are prevailed upon to admit them as true in order to save some other evident truth with which they are necessarily connected. We do not see them; they are inevident to our understanding, but the authority witnessing to them, with which they have a most intimate connection, has of itself intrinsic evidence which necessitates our recognition and belief. It is the strength and weight of authority communicating to the mind a knowledge of these truths unseen,

which makes the appeal to us and elicits the mind's assent. Thus our acceptance of these truths is not of vision, not of reason deducing conclusions from known premises, but of faith; and the authority on which we rely in assenting to these invisible truths as being the motive of faith, determines and specifies our faith. If the authority be human, our faith is human, and therefore defectible; if the authority be divine, then is our faith also divine and infallible.

The mode of cognition which we ascribe to faith—that namely which rests on authority extrinsic, so far as we go, to the things believed, is not, as some might at first be inclined to fancy, a gratuitous mental fabrication excogitated to meet the exigencies of the subject. It is founded on truly reasonable grounds; and its use in human affairs is constant among men, as meriting the highest respect. All the facts of human history which personal investigation has not verified, all the discoveries and conclusions of science, which we ourselves have not made or witnessed, many of the truths incident and necessary to the daily life and conduct of both individuals and society, are made known to us and are received according to the same principle and method of knowledge which is applied to faith.[22] Who would think of regarding history in general as unsound and unreasonable because based on authority? Who would be so stupid as to despise the data of science

[22] Cf. Pesch., *Prael. Dogm.*, Vol. VIII., n. 307.

simply on the grounds that he has not discovered or witnessed them? But if we accept the testimony of men, why should we reject the testimony of God? If human authority is a criterion of truth, why not divine authority?

From what has so far been said, it ought to be clear that the assent of faith is not an unreasonable act—it is not a blind motion of the mind, but is, on the contrary, founded on truly rational grounds. For the knowledge which is of faith, even when considered from a point of view entirely objective, is made up of elements, harmonious indeed and mutually supporting, which when taken together, render the assent of the mind at once certain and most reasonable. There is just enough discernible by reason, just enough possible to natural capabilities, to link the mind with the supernatural.

To understand this more fully, and to point out that which, in the object of faith, is capable of being understood by reason, and that which lies beyond all natural powers, we need but analyze some supernatural truth of faith.

Let us take, for example, the Most Holy Trinity: "We believe in God, Three and One." We believe that in the one identical nature of the Godhead there are three persons in nowise distinct from that nature, yet really distinct one from the other; they are the one nature; and yet, because of the relations which they

bear to one another, they are distinct in person. This is a truth absolutely beyond the grasp of any and all created intelligences, but when once made known to us by God, reason can show indeed that it is not a plain contradiction, not an absurdity; for the three persons are identical in a sense (*i.e.*, with the divine nature), and distinct in another and quite different sense (i.e., by reason of their mutual relations). Now if this truth of faith, which is of such a transcendent nature, and which so far surpasses the sublimest capabilities of all created intelligences as to be utterly inconceivable aside from revelation, stood as an object of faith entirely by itself, unsupported by anything at once known to us, while connected with and attesting to it, a rational faith in it would be impossible. In other words, without an adequate medium of assurance as to the reality and truth of this mystery, faith in it would be unreasonable. But the fact is quite otherwise. Although not necessarily arrived at by a discursive process, it appeals to the mind as a conclusion following from premises which one can easily see and understand. First of all, reason tells us that whatever God, the essence and source of all truth, has revealed or may reveal must be certain and true beyond all question. If God has proclaimed anything, if He has announced the mystery of the Holy Trinity, all doubt as to the truth of this mystery is necessarily excluded. So far the process of reasoning is clear; but

we are not yet prepared to give our assent. The mystery before us is not yet brought home to the mind in a manner sufficient to evoke our faith in it. The connection between God, the essential truth, and the mystery of the Trinity is not yet plain to us. There is need of an adequate medium to link the two together, the naturally knowable, which we recognize and can vouch for, namely, God's omniscience and truthfulness, and the supernatural mystery which we do not see. And as this medium must enjoy in itself the convincing force and infallibility of the conclusion which it sanctions, none other than God Himself can supply it. Hence when the mind gives to the mystery of the Trinity the assent of faith, it is because God, the all truthful, Who can neither err nor lead into error, *has Himself revealed it.* God is not only the object of faith; He is also the *motive,* the authority and sanction, of the mind's assent. We would not, neither could we prudently believe in things entirely beyond all our natural capabilities, unless God assure us of their existence and reality. But if He speaks clearly and completely (as He has done), vouching for the abiding truth of things not seen, then the assent of faith becomes in every way most reliable and most reasonable.

II

THE SUBJECTIVE ELEMENTS OF FAITH

THE PREPARATION FOR FAITH

It has been said in the previous chapter that divine faith, viewed subjectively, admits of a two-fold consideration: it may be considered as a supernatural virtue or power of the soul, or it may be regarded as an act—natural, as proceeding from the natural faculties of intelligence and will, but supernatural, as influenced by grace and touching things beyond the compass of nature's powers. And as the act of faith, which alone is at present under consideration, is the result of three distinct factors, the intellect, will and grace, working in harmony and united, each playing its vital part to produce the one effect, we now pass from a study of the object, to a consideration of the subjective elements of faith—the intelligence, the will and divine grace. For, in order that an intelligent and reasonable act of faith may be elicited, the mind, or faculty of understanding, must be made aware of and rendered certain with respect to the *fact and genuine content of revelation;* the will or motive power of the soul must

move the intellect to give the assent of faith; and, because of the inevidence and supernatural character of the object, the mind must be illuminated and the will fortified by special grace.

From the nature of faith, as explained above, it is clear that it implies a relation between a known or knowable object and a knowing subject, between the truths that are to be believed and the mind that is to give to these truths the act of belief. It is also clear from what has been said there, that the object of faith, that is, the subject-matter which the act of faith is to embrace, is not something personal and natural as originating from and with ourselves; not our own feelings, or impulses, or desires, or yearnings; not the result of human learning, or study, or investigation; not what our individual experience with others, or with the world, or with worldly affairs has taught us; not what this one or that one has given us out of the wealth of his own natural attainments or private illuminations; but rather, whatever is contained explicitly or implicitly in the *revelation* made by God to man. We understand, further, that the only reason why the mind should give the assent of faith to the truths of revelation is because God, who knows all truth and cannot deceive or be deceived, has vouchsafed to make them known to the world.

It is the authority of God *revealing* that inclines the

mind to believe.[1] With this understanding of *what* it is to believe and *why* it is to believe, the mind is quite content. The process so far is clear. But in the further step which we must take, we desire to know if God has really made a revelation, and, given that He has, if that revelation is to be found preserved in our midst today. There is, indeed, no difficulty offered to our minds by the possibility of revelation—by the fact that God should make a revelation to His rational creatures. If God knows all things actual or possible, as in truth He must from His very nature, if He is all-wise, all-powerful, all-truthful, why can He not speak? Why can He not tell us something of Himself, something of His unlimited truth and beauty and goodness, something of that sublime eternal world which stretches beyond the heavens, and of which He Himself is the life and the light and joy everlasting? And if, as is most becoming His loving-kindness, God deigns to stoop and speak to the creatures He has fashioned in His own image and likeness, can they not hear Him and understand Him? Man is endowed with intelligence and understanding precisely that he may know truth, not one or another truth, but, according to his capacity, all truth. The human mind is capable of knowing truth just as the eye is capable of taking in the daylight. For truth, be it natural or supernatural, be it of this or of some other world, cannot be opposed to truth, any more than light

[1] Conc. Vat., cap. 3, *de Fide.*

can be opposed to light, any more than a thing can be opposed to itself. Therefore, it is certain that God *can* speak, that He *can* reveal, that He *can* manifest the existence and nature of things, a knowledge of which would be otherwise impossible to man. And although the truths that He reveals may be, like Himself, of a nature so transcendent and lofty as to go beyond the comprehension of created intelligences, yet can these same intelligences, finite though they be, hear the voice of their Creator, and understand, in part at least, the message that He brings.

But while all this is true and reasonable, while it is plain that God must vouch for the reality of the things of faith simply because they are supernatural and unseen, still, as was just said, the mind is loath to yield its assent until it has clearly seen and understood that God has, *as a matter of fact,* revealed the objective realities to which faith is invited. I must first be certain that God has really made a revelation,[2] and secondly, that that revelation in which I am to put my faith is really the revelation which God has made. Until this is assured I cannot reasonably and unreservedly give to it the homage of belief.[3] It would be otherwise, had God spoken clearly and directly to each one of us; if, as with the seers of old, He had shed upon our minds a divine and heavenly light, bringing within our ken the

[2] S. Th. *III. Dist.,* q. 1, a. 11 ad 1.
[3] Cf. St. Aug., *De Genesi ad litteram,* lib. XII., cap. XIX., n. 41.

vision of things unseen. But it is not so. The message from on high has not come to us immediately and directly. And it is not enough that our reason assure us that God, of His very nature, is omniscient and truthful; that there is a world above and beyond us more real indeed than the one in which we live and move; that the realities of that higher world can be made known, and, if made known, are truly no more repugnant to our natural capabilities of understanding, than to ocular vision is the light of the far-off stars which the telescope alone can discover; no, over and above all this the *fact* of revelation must be established for us, the grounds of *credibility* must be explored, and we must be convinced that God has in reality revealed the truths to which we are to assent.

Now the Christian revelation which is the object of Christian faith is said to have been given to the world by Christ and His Apostles, and it is of this that we must be assured. If there is really any doubt that Christ and the Apostles were the announcers of a heaven-given doctrine, or that that doctrine has come down to us in its purity and integrity, then is it impossible to give to it our faith. For faith is not mere opinion, not probability, it does not admit of doubt or fear of error in any way.

If, then, before we can reasonably elicit an act of faith in the truths of revelation, we must be certain of the fact that a revelation has been made, and that it has

come down to us integral and unadulterated, the question naturally arises as to the means by which the mind can be rendered certain in this matter; and further, as to the kind and character of the certitude thus resulting. How can we become assured of the fact and of the integrity of revelation? What is the nature of the certitude which must precede the assent of faith in establishing the grounds of credibility?

THE PREPARATION FOR FAITH IN THE INTELLECT

Before proceeding further let it be noted that the grounds of credibility must not be confounded with the grounds of faith. The latter constitute the motive of divine faith, the reason why we believe, namely, the authority of God revealing, which implies infallibility in knowledge and truth in utterance. The former, or grounds of credibility, precede the act of faith and are the motives by which we are convinced that God has made a revelation, and that its content is, therefore, evidently credible and worthy of belief. Chief among these grounds or motives of credibility are usually enumerated the character of the person or persons claiming to have the divine commission to announce God's revelation to the world, the nature and effects of the doctrine announced, and in particular the miracles and prophecies wrought in confirmation of the divine origin and supernatural constitution of that doctrine or reve-

lation.[4] Miracles and prophecies, in fact, are the supreme criteria by which to test the supernatural character of any doctrine. One real miracle worked in confirmation of a doctrine or teaching is sufficient warrant for its unfailing truthfulness and reliability, for God only can be the author of a miracle, and He cannot bear witness to error or falsehood.

There are indeed two questions here involved, two questions with respect to which the mind needs to be made certain. First, there is the doctrine or teaching which, in the beginning, at the dawn of Christianty, purported to be of divine origin and to be God's revelation to mankind; and secondly, there is the religious society or system in our midst to-day which makes the self-same claim, namely, that God is its author and that it possesses God's revelation to the world. Now it is clear that the present claims of Christianity must first be made to agree with the teachings of Christ and the Apostles. There must be some way of ascertaining if the two are in substantial agreement or not. In other words, the deposit of revelation which to-day is presented as the object of faith must be traced back to its origin, and must be shown to be at least substantially the same as that bequeathed to the world by Christ and His immediate and duly authorized followers. How is this to be done? What method must we follow in order to verify the truths of present-day orthodox Christianity?

[4] Zigliara, *Propaed.*, cap. IX., n. IV.

Here it is important to observe the distinction now commonly drawn between divine and Catholic faith. Faith is called "divine" when that which is believed is contained in the revelation made by God, but has not yet been authoritatively defined by the Church; it is "Catholic" when, in addition to its having been revealed by God, it has been declared in definition by proper and competent ecclesiastical authority.

When there is question of Catholic faith it goes without saying that, for all those who admit the divine institution and consequent infallible authority of the Church, there is need of no other means by which to be assured of the fact of revelation and of the integrity of that revelation than the Church itself. The authority of the Church is of itself sufficient, for those who recognize and believe it, for all that it teaches and maintains. As God is omniscient and all-powerful He can communicate all truth to His Church, He can guide and preserve His Church from all error; and if, as is here supposed, He has so instructed and does so direct His Church, there can be no reason for doubting or calling into question anything the Church may say or teach. But in the case of those who do not thus regard the Church as God's institution, divinely endowed and guided by His Spirit to know and to teach all truth, the matter is quite different. For people of this latter class an investigation is necessary. The Christian system which now presents itself to the world claiming to

have received and to still possess the revelation preached by Christ and the Apostles, must be traced, or at least traceable, together with its deposit of revelation, back to the time of Christ and His Apostles. A careful appeal must be made to study and to human history century after century, and it must be shown, or possible to show, without doubt, that the doctrine which the Apostles of to-day are preaching is indeed the one which came from Christ and the first Apostles. This is the first step. And when it has been thoroughly established, as in truth can be done in a purely human way, that the facts and teachings we now possess in Sacred Scripture and from authentic tradition are indeed the very same facts and teachings which Christ and the Apostles promulgated to the world as a divine revelation, we find ourselves back at the beginning of Christianity, at the very source and fountain-head of Christian teaching and Christian revelation.[5] But, assured as we thus can be that the truths of Christianity now before the world as a revelation, and proposed to us as the subject-matter of faith, are substantially identical with the truths taught by Christ and the Apostles, we are not yet in a position to make an act of faith in these truths. We see that the tenets of the orthodox Christian body of to-day are perfectly reliable inasmuch as they have come to us integral and unadulterated from the founder and

[5] Cf. Tanquerey, *Synop. theol. dogm. fundam.*, edit. XIV., pars I, cap. II.

first teachers of Christianity, but we need yet to investigate and ponder this revelation at its fountain-head to see if in reality it has come out from God and possesses the stamp and seal of divinity.

As before said, the chief means or criteria by which we are to be guided in establishing the supernatural genius of the revelation preached by Christ and His Apostles are the distinctive characteristics of the promulgators themselves. the nature and effects of the doctrine they have taught, and especially the miracles they have worked and the prophecies they have fulfilled in confirmation of their doctrine.

The merest glance at the life and character of the first announcers of the Christian revelation will convince any unbiased reader that they possessed not only all the marks of competent and honest teachers and witnesses, but that there was something altogether extraordinary in their life and manner. Their clearness of perception and understanding; their open candor and burning, but sober zeal; their honesty of purpose, their fearlessness; the purity and holiness of their lives; the many trials and sufferings and sorrows they sustained in order to deliver their heavenly message to men, are assuredly sufficient to remove from every unprejudiced mind all fear of fraud and error. Then, too, the doctrine that they preached is in perfect harmony with their lives. It is free from error of whatever kind, it elevates and ennobles man, it leads to the highest perfection, it con-

tains all the signs of divinity. The teaching we have in revelation does not turn man away from God, his Creator, it does not set man against his fellow-man, it does not permit of the neglect of one's duties to society, to one's family, or to one's self, neither does it allow indulgence to any passion or vice. On the contrary, its positive injunctions are of the noblest type. For the doctrines which Christ and the Apostles propounded to the world as a divine revelation have, as we know, led men from darkness and error to truth and light, from a state of sin and degradation to lives of virtue and holiness, from the horrors of slavery and bondage to the enjoyment of true and perfect liberty. And all this has been accomplished in spite of the greatest odds, in spite of all manner of suffering, of self-denial and oftentimes of sacrifice of all temporal goods and pleasures. Since, then, these are some of the innumerable beneficent effects of a teaching which claimed to be divine, who can really doubt that it has come from God? Who can seriously question its high origin?

But of still greater force in convincing the mind of the divine character of the Christian revelation are the miracles that were wrought and the prophecies that were fulfilled in confirmation of its heavenly claims. The miracles and wondrous deeds that accompanied the teachings of Christ and His Apostles, as well as the prophecies they fulfilled, constitute perhaps the most

[*] Zigliara, *Propaed, l.c,*

striking feature of those teachings. It is these unearthly works that distinguished the teachers as heaven-sent messengers, and set their doctrines above anything the world had till then ever known. Even now those deeds, though authenticated as facts beyond doubt or question, are a stumbling-block to minds irreligious. Mere reason cannot understand them, because they are above human powers. It would sometimes reject them if it could, but there they are, cold facts of history, and no one who accepts any records of the past can consistently refuse belief in them.

But it is not the mere fact that the announcers of the Christian dispensation worked miracles and verified prophecies that helps the mind to have faith in revelation; neither is it the mere fact that the narratives which embody revelation are interspersed and fairly glitter with the accounts of the miraculous doings of its teachers. No; miracles and prophecies are a proof of the divinity of revelation, and, consequently, induce the mind to faith, precisely because they were performed and verified in confirmation of the divinity of revelation. As said above, a miracle or prophecy, in its strict and proper sense, cannot be the effect of any created powers but must be ascribed to God alone; and therefore it is always a certain sign of divine intervention, and an infallible assurance of the truth of that which it is intended to prove and in support of which it is wrought. It is clear that this must be so, for God

cannot be the author of lie or fraud, He cannot take part in error and deception. And hence when He communicates His divine power to a creature, and thus enables the creature to perform works for His own purpose which no created power alone could effect, He becomes the principal author of the deed done and responsible for its truth and goodness.

It is thus that the countless divine prodigies performed by Christ and His Apostles were a proof primarily and chiefly of the truthfulness of the doctrines they were teaching. They were the divine seal put upon their works and teachings to show to men of all times that they themselves were messengers of the Most High, entrusted with God's revelation to His creatures.[7] How often, indeed, did the Saviour make reference to His miracles as a proof of His own divinity and of His teaching! When men would not believe Him, when they doubted His character and His words, when they turned away from Him, no longer able to bear the transcendent unearthly brilliancy of His doctrine, He appealed invariably to His works. When John the Baptist would know for certain if He was the Christ, the expected Messias, and sent his disciples to interrogate the Saviour, the answer given was: "Go and relate to John what you have heard and seen. The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead rise again, the poor have the

[7] Zigliara, *Op. cit.* cap. X-XI.

Gospel preached to them" (Matt. xi. 4.5). And in thus referring to these, His wondrous works, as a testimony to His divinity and to the truth of His preaching, Christ would have John and his disciples also observe that these very works, although miraculous in themselves, were also the fulfillment of prophecies uttered long before relative to the Messias (Cfr. Isa. xxxv. 5, and lxi. 1). And when the Jews, sorely vexed at his words, asked plainly if He were the Christ, "Jesus answered them: I speak to you, and you believe not: the works that I do in the name of my Father, they give testimony of me. . . . If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though you will not believe me, believe the works: that you may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in the Father" (John x. 25, 37 and 38). (Cfr. Matt. xi. 2-6; Luke vii. 19-23).

We remember, too, how He upbraided the faithless cities that had witnessed, without profit, so many of His miraculous deeds. "Woe to thee, Corozain, woe to thee, Bethsaida: for if in Tyre and Sidon had been wrought the miracles that have been wrought in you, they had long ago done penance in sack-cloth and ashes. But I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you. And thou, Capharnaum, shalt thou be exalted up to heaven? thou shalt go down even unto hell. For if in Sodom had been wrought the miracles that have

been wrought in thee, perhaps it had remained unto this day. But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for thee" (Matt. xi. 21-25). (Cfr. Luke x. 13-17).

In order, therefore, to convince men of the truth of His doctrine and of His mission, the Saviour was not only the author of numberless works and prodigies which God alone could perform, but He made special appeal to these works, He pointed to them as indisputable proof and evidence that He himself was the anointed of God, and that the things He did, apparently as man, were in reality the works of the Almighty. "Though you will not believe me, believe the works . . . they give testimony of me" (John x. 38). And He predicted, moreover, that these signs should distinguish His true followers, and should be the reason for faith in their teaching (Cfr. Mark xvi. 17 and 18; Acts xvi. 18; ii. 4, and x. 46; xxviii. 5 and 8).

Thus it is that miracles were the chief means chosen by Almighty God to induce the minds of men to have faith in the religious truths revealed to the world through His Only-begotten Son. They were not, indeed, the only means He could have selected for His gracious purpose, but they were the means best suited to our nature. It was necessary that in some way we should be made aware that Christ was really God, and that His teaching was the revelation of heavenly truths

for man's salvation. And as we naturally acquire all our knowledge through the medium of our senses, from sensible objects, even the knowledge of God's own existence, it was becoming that divine condescension should likewise, through visible sensible effects, lead away the minds of men to a knowledge of things unseen and supernatural. To proceed thus from the things we know to things we do not know, from what we see to what we do not see, is the ordinary method of human cognition, it is the process suited to our present state. While, then, it was not beyond the power of God to take other means to make us understand the reality and truth of His communication to mankind, it was more within our grasp and better accommodated to our nature that this should be done through miraculous deeds and events that all could see and understand.[8]

THE PREPARATION FOR FAITH IN THE WILL

We now see in a general way what is required on the part of the mind or intellect before one is prepared to make an act of divine faith in the truths of revelation. We see that the complex of religious truths now embraced in the teachings of the orthodox Christian Church can and must be traceable back, as facts of human history, to their authors and first promulgators. Abstracting from the existence of the Church, which

[8] S. Th. 2-2ae, qu. CLXXVIII., a. 1; Quodlib. II., qu. IV., a. VI.

is a witness unto herself for all she teaches, abstracting from the benign and powerful influence she has exercised on the world for nearly twenty centuries, abstracting from the fact that she was made the great depository and guardian of Christian truths and revelation, we can understand how these very truths, as embodied in Sacred Writings and inherited from sound tradition, can be carried back to their source and fountain-head in just the same way, and by the very same means as the truths and facts of Roman, Grecian, or Persian history can be traced to their respective sources and compared with the authentic narratives of their different authors. Moreover, carried thus back to the first authors, in a human way, of the Christian revelation, we can perceive, upon inspection, that such was the character of those authors, such the genius of the doctrine they announced, so marvellous its effects on its hearers and all subsequent generations down to our own day, so wonderful and inexplicable by human agencies the countless prodigies performed by those authors in confirmation of their doctrine, that we are constrained to admit that such teachings could have no other source and authority than God Himself.

It follows, then, that we are, or can be made, certain of the fact of divine revelation. We are sure that Almighty God has really made known to man the sublime truths of orthodox Christianity, and that these truths have remained in their integrity and purity down to

the present time—nay, that they will so remain throughout all time to the end of the world. God gave His revelation for the eternal salvation of mankind, for all men even to the last. Man in his fallen state needed such a revelation; it would be morally impossible to attain to his high destiny without it; and God, as we see, has vouchsafed it to him, and hence God will also provide that it shall always remain a certain and unfailing means of human salvation.

Wherefore, the certitude which precedes the act of faith in establishing the grounds of credibility depends for its firmness and reliability on human testimony and human witnesses. It is the same as that which assures us of the truth of any and all other facts of human history. We know that God has spoken, in the first place, because reliable history tells us so. Whatever may be the nature of that divine communication, history will not permit us to doubt the fact. Even the miracles and prophecies which prove the divinity of Christ and His mission, even the institution of the Church with its unearthly endowments and supernatural prerogatives are facts which, in the first instance, have been made known to the world through the medium of human testimony. We are certain, therefore, of the grounds of credibility, of the fact and integrity of divine revelation, by a moral or historical certitude. Reason establishes the possibility and necessity of revelation, history gives us the fact; reason shows

us that God can speak to His creatures, history tells us that He has spoken; reason assures us of what God is able to do and to say, history makes us aware of what He has done and has said.[9]

But while the certainty by which we are convinced of the grounds of credibility, although perfectly reliable and exclusive of every fear of error, does not transcend the moral or historical order, we must not thence infer that the assent of faith itself is not of a higher degree of certitude. Indeed the assent of faith enjoys a degree of certainty beyond anything else we can know. Relying, as it does, on the knowledge and truthfulness of Almighty God, it is inconceivable that it should be in any wise subject to error or mistake. There are other things, such as first principles, which, by their very nature are incompatible with error on our part; but even the certainty which these produce is vastly inferior to the certainty of the assent of faith. The cause of certainty in the one case, is God, the source and essence of all truth; in the other, it is a creature whose only claim to truth is that it has come from God and participates in the nature and truthfulness of God. Without God there would be no truth of any kind. All things that are or that can be, exist and are true only in so far as they have come from Him and partake of His own uncreated truth and essence. And thus it is

[9] Van Noort, *Tract. de fontibus revel., de fide divina*, cap. II., a. II.

that the assent of faith which depends for its assurance directly on God, surpasses in certainty all else that we can know.[10]

Now it would seem that, after reason and history have united to make us certain of the reasonableness and of the fact of divine revelation, faith ought naturally to follow. We understand that God can reveal, that, if He will, He can speak to us as a father to his children; we see, moreover, that if He has made a revelation, there can be no error in it, it must be wise and true; and lastly, we are assured by authentic and trustworthy history, to say nothing of the convincing nature of the doctrines themselves, that God has, in fact, condescended to reveal to the world the truths of Christianity. But aside from any laborious process of reasoning or historical investigation, faith in Christianity ought to be easy. Even without going back to the giving of a revelation, without following it up, or seeing that it can be followed up, through the centuries for the purpose of verification, a thinking man who looks about him, who takes into account the effects on the world and mankind everywhere that demand a cause supernatural, would perforce be persuaded that something out of the natural order had sometime taken place. Looking but cursorily at the marvelous growth and spread of the Christian Church with the wonders that have attended it; considering the source invisible of

[10] Hugon, *Log. Maj.*, tract. II., q. III., a. VI., n. VIII.

its life and vigor, despite its enemies, its battles, its sufferings; seeing its constant triumphs ever rising from the midst of seeming defeat—the faith and heroism of its myriad martyrs and confessors, the spotless purity of its sainted virgins, the wisdom, holiness and sagacity of its laws and institutions—viewing these striking facts with sincerity and fairness, one could hardly refuse to believe that Christianity must be divine in its origin and true in its claims. The facts are obvious to all, they are inexplicable in natural ways.

But, strange as it truly is, after one has taken into account all these signs of the supernatural evidently working in our midst, after it is clear that the effects we behold must be the necessary outcome of a divine intervention and a divine communication, even with the assurance of history and all that reason can add, one is but on the threshold, so to say, of making an act of faith. One sees and owns in theory that Christianity may lay just and reasonable claims to his acceptance, that it is deserving of credence, so far as one can discern. Further, one may go so far as eloquently to extol, not alone the work of the Church, but its doctrines, and the faith and zeal of its adherents. The good they effect to society and to the world at large, their lives so pure and spotless in a world of corruption, are facts, one must allow, that point to a divine assistance and breathe of a world beyond this.

These beautiful sentiments, it is true, many who

have not the faith are wont frequently to express in private and in public. It seems paradoxical that such feelings should be fostered, while the faith they praise and admire should be left unembraced. Something is wanting, something at fault. That they are not entirely convinced is a possible explanation. Some difficulties, perchance, remain for them unsolved. They are reasonable men, answer they if pressed for a reply, they can admire a person, or institution, or form of worship without becoming identified with it. As for themselves, their way and duty are not entirely clear. Or again, like the faithless hearers in the parable, the cares and distractions of the world absorb their attention and waste their strength, and religion is crowded out of their lives. There is no time for special thought and investigation, and the life of faith, plainly admirable as it is, passes like a splendid pageant, and leaves them engrossed in the world.

Others there are who proceed further still. So far as objective reasoning and attitude of mind are concerned, they approach nearer the state of faith; and yet withal they do not embrace it, they do not get beyond the realm of theory. They have gone into matters of religion; they have given them careful thought and prolonged study; they have pondered the difficulties commonly raised against the Church and her claims and have solved them, if not in entirety, at least in a way that satisfies. The teachings of the Church are con-

vincing to these studious admirers, reasonably they have no cause to hesitate, and yet they withhold their profession of faith. The light in their midst they see, the city on the mountain top cannot be ignored, but they do not finally believe. That they ought to make profession of faith, is clear to them, and they regret that they do not go further. At times it seems that they must rise up from their meaningless state, and enter the bright company of their enviable brethren; but their will betrays them, it is weak and falters at the step. To embrace the Christian religion, to submit one's self to the laws and exactions, beautiful yet rigorous, of the Church; to put out the dark tenants of the heart, which from youth have swayed and enchanted it; to give up the unlawful pursuit of gain and pleasure; to put aside the pride of life and cease to chase its phantoms; to become pure and holy; to fast and abstain, watch, pray and work the deeds of the just against the day of the Lord and His coming—to require all this from those who have not been disciplined in the practices of faith from childhood, from those whose manner of life has left them warped and distorted in mind and heart, is surely to impose a burden they cannot bear. The Church with its chosen children, conquerors of the world, preordained and called from on high before the world was made, is good and holy, and all that it claims to be; but they cannot enter its fold, they cannot submit to the requirements of faith.

Such, without doubt, is the practical mental state of vast numbers who do not embrace the Christian faith. Their obligations are plain, but their will refuses the sacrifice. Infidels in practice, they believe in theory. They are sincere in their speculations, they would like to believe and would indeed step over the boundary to faith, were it not for the obstacles that beset the practical side of their lives. They are not to be classed with the indifferent; nor with the scoffers, who, before they saw the light, determined to resist it; nor are they to be associated with those whom doubt holds and torments. No; such as these fair-minded persons have gone about the problem of faith with sincere purpose and with a desire for the light. They have solved its questions and dispelled, to their satisfaction, its intellectual enemies; and still after all, they find themselves unable to take hold of the coveted object of their desire and search. What a contrast between the pitiable state of these well-meaning souls, and that of their more fortunate brethren who, having accompanied them to the borders of the promised land, pass over the boundary to partake forever more of its joy and plenty! What is the cause of the difference? What has wrought the change in the one and not in the other? What in the one has prompted the further step to faith, apparently so short and easy, but of such paramount importance? It is the will. The will has produced the change. That abiding seat of motion and latent force, being itself in-

fluenced by power from on high, has issued the command of action to the enlightened intelligence, and faith has been the result. All along the intellect has perceived its duty; and the will, at last generous and powerful by grace, has bidden the intelligence proceed to definite action, and it is over—the whole man enters into faith.[11]

In the matter of faith the practical judgment of the mind following the movement of the will is invariably efficacious; it never stops short of the perfect act of belief. Of itself the intellect would ever remain unsettled and vacillating as to the final step. No matter how convincing the evidence attesting to the objective reality, no matter how satisfied it be in theory with respect to the problem before it, until finally impelled by the will, the intellect cannot proceed to the last practical judgment which completes the act of faith. The reason or intellectual faculty begins and concludes the task, but the will, as prevailed upon by grace, is the source of power and courage. The reason discovers, clears and prepares the way, but the will moves on to victory.

THE PREPARATION FOR FAITH UNDER GRACE

In order to get a better understanding of the several operations that concur in the production of the one simple act of divine faith, it will be useful to draw

[11] S. Th. 1-2ae, q. CIX., a. 1; 2-2ae, q. II., a. IX.

out, a little more in detail, the respective functions of both intellect and will. In this connection also, the part contributed by divine grace will be more clearly manifested.

Of the different subjective operations which lead to the complete and definite act of supernatural faith, we may distinguish, for sake of clearness, several as appertaining to both intellect and will respectively. Having explored all the motives of credibility and being content with the issue, the intellect avows in theory that the truths of faith are deserving of acceptance. The intellect, in fact, is not free as to this speculative judgment. It is unable to resist the light, extrinsic though it be to the object, which witnesses to the unseen reality. This necessity of speculative assent on the part of the understanding arises from the intrinsic evidence of the motives of credibility;[12] but while it is thus not at liberty to reject that which testifies to the truths of faith, it nevertheless is always able to withhold its final assent to the object proposed for belief. Moreover it is not possible that the intellect, convinced as it is of the motives of credibility, should pass from the realm of theory and speculation to the definite practical judgment, that it ought to believe, without the efficacious movement of the will. That faith is reasonable, that one would do well to embrace it, the intellect can and does of itself determine. But to say to itself, "I ought

[12] Conc. Vat., const. *Dei Filius*, cap. 3.

St. Albert's College Library

to believe," and then go on to affirm, "I do believe," are not within the limits of its own unaided possibilities. The practical judgment, then, expressing as it does the *hic et nunc* duty of assent, followed by the command to elicit the final act, is the product of the intelligence as moved and impelled by the will. This efficacious command to place the definite act of belief is not to be confounded with the practical judgment; both proceed from the intellect, both are the result of voluntary influence and impulse. The latter, or practical judgment, shows the intention and determination to place the act, the former, succeeding to this attitude of mind, gives the order of execution.

Again, it is already clear that the practical judgment to believe, together with the efficacious command of execution, is to be sharply distinguished from the primary or speculative judgment. As said above, this latter judgment is not a free act of the mind. The mind is not at liberty to admit or reject the self-evident motives of credibility. If it considers them at all it must, by force of evidence, give its assent. Further, since the judgment of credibility is of the natural order, the effect of natural reason and intrinsic evidence, it can very well be arrived at without the aid of special grace. It furnishes the natural, firm foundation for the superstructure which is of grace. The practical judgment, on the contrary, as well as the command that follows it, is a free act, which cannot be said to be entirely inde-

pendent of grace. It is free because, respecting as it does the unseen mystery, it is not the result of intrinsic evidence, but the effect of a generous impulse of the will. It would seem also to be supernatural in character, and therefore the consequence of grace enlightening the intelligence and inspiring the will to action, because of the assent of faith which infallibly follows. This practical judgment and efficacious command to believe are indicative of a sincere and ardent desire for faith—a desire which can have no other cause than the Holy Ghost Himself.[13] Nature of itself would, indeed, be incapable of an impulse so high and holy. A real serious wish for the things of faith, for actual belief, involves more than mere nature could pretend to. It supposes that the intelligence is convinced of the grounds of credibility; it implies the rejection of all doubts and difficulties that may arise from whatever source; it shows that the will, desirous of the supernatural truth, has turned, or begun to turn, from the ways of sin and vice to consider the things of eternity.

THE ACT OF FAITH PRODUCED BY INTELLECT AND WILL UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF GRACE

But whatever one may hold as to the supernatural character of the practical judgment, it is certain beyond all question that the definite act of faith which infallibly follows is both free and supernatural in character.

[13] Conc. Arausic. can. 7.

It is the fruit of grace, the effect of divine illumination and inspiration. Of this we are assured by the Vatican Council, which has defined that the assent of faith is free, and the result of special grace, even when charity or habitual grace is wanting.[14] This is also evident as soon as we reflect on the faculty from which faith proceeds, and turn our attention to the object with which it deals. Although commanded by the will, as theologians term it, faith, like all acts of cognition, is elicited by the intellect. It is commanded by the volitional faculty, but comes directly from the mind or knowing faculty. Since, then, faith is formally an act of the intellect, and has for its object the unseen mystery, we can readily understand that it must be an entirely free act. It is only intrinsic evidence that can force the assent of the mind. In the presence of self-evident truths, as has been said, the intellect is not at liberty to give or withhold its assent. It may, indeed, divert its attention, it may turn from the light to consider other things, but so long as there is question of admitting or rejecting the intrinsically evident object before it, there is no choice. But in the case of faith, the object of which is invisible and not evident to us, either by its own or borrowed light, like first principles or conclusions from them, the intellect is in no wise forced to give its assent, but can give it or withhold it to suit its pleasure.

[14] Conc. Vat. *de Fide*, can. 5.

Likewise, from the nature of the object we see that the assent of faith must be of the supernatural order, and therefore the effect of grace. As explained before, every act gets its essential character from the object with which it is concerned. If the object is good or bad, natural or supernatural, the act, in so far as it respects the object, is correspondingly good or bad, natural or supernatural. Hence it follows that, because the strict object of divine faith is by its very nature divine and supernatural, the act by which we elicit our belief in it must also be supernatural and the outcome of special grace.

We are now in a position to understand how it is that the intelligence, will and grace contribute their efficacy to the one, complete act of divine faith. They are, so to say, the intrinsic, constituent elements of faith, viewed in its subjective aspect. We see, moreover, that, preceding the final act, there is a mutual interchange of operations and influences on the part of these different factors. These operations do not really constitute the act of faith, simple in itself, but are, so to say, the preambles or necessary conditions that prepare the way for it. The intellect, leading the march, discovers that God has spoken and given a revelation; by its own light and power, assisted by human history and human testimony, it explores the claims which such revelation has for acceptance and credence; it considers, compares, traces and verifies the various and multiple doctrines and con-

tentions of orthodox Christianity; it goes up and down the centuries, if need be, from the time of Christ to our own time; it looks into the Church and ponders its history; it makes pass in review the long line of the faithful followers of the Saviour—the glorious confessors and martyrs and virgins, the Fathers, the doctors, the theologians who have explained, defended and helped to keep intact the sacred message that came from Heaven, until at last convinced in theory, it rests satisfied and assured that the truths of faith are in every way objectively credible and worthy of belief.

With so much knowledge presented to it, the will, desirous of participating in the good thus newly discovered and divinely attractive, moves the intellect to pass from the region of theory and speculation to the practical conclusion that it ought here and now to believe, and thereupon issues the resolute command *to believe*. But neither the will, in giving the order of practical judgment and command of faith to the intellect, nor the intellect in its execution of this order and command, is independent of the influence of grace. Grace is behind the generous voluntary impulse, as it also is the special light and inspiration of the intellect's salutary resolve.

There is but one more act to complete the drama, one more step to end the journey. The intellect, having decided that, all things considered, it ought to give its final assent, is once again moved by the will, influ-

enced by grace, to elicit the free but unqualified act of faith in the truths of revelation, and thus the task is ended.[15]

The act of faith is, then, simple, free and supernatural in itself. It is the outcome of a number of preparatory acts on the part of the intellect and will, some of which are natural, some the fruit of grace. From the intellect proceed the speculative judgment, which considers the motives of credibility, the practical judgment, by which it avows that it ought here and now to believe; the efficacious command to elicit the final act; and lastly the act of faith itself. Each of these distinct and successive operations issue directly from the intellect. The will likewise has its several actions to perform. It must needs prevail upon the intelligence to descend from the realm of theory and speculation and to elicit the practical judgment and effective command to believe; and it is also the motive power that leads to the final act of faith. Special grace intervenes as a necessary requisite to influence the will in moving the intellect, both as to the practical judgment and efficacious command and as to the ultimate act of assent. It may also interpose in the formation of the speculative judgment: and most probably does play a vital part, as we have seen, in enlightening the intellect to arrive at the practical judgment and definite resolve to embrace the faith.

[15] S. Th. 2-2ae, qu. II., a. IX.

But although the act of faith is, as it were, the outgrowth of multiple antecedent operations and influences, on the part of the intellect, will and divine grace, so intimately connected that, to some writers, it has appeared like a conclusion drawn from premises, we must persistently bear in mind that it is an absolutely free act, and yet entirely certain. It suffers no violence, and still is far removed from fear of error. The divine light which illumines the mind and fortifies the will is not such as to take away the obscurity of the object and the darkness of the vision. And while the act of assent is perfectly certain, the arguments of the understanding have not sufficient cogency to necessitate the mind in actual belief. Neither does faith result from blind passions, or emotions, or sub-conscious processes of mind and heart; no, the intellect assents to the truth of faith because it is moved to do so by the will. We already understand this. But in thus yielding to voluntary impulse, the action of the mind is both rational and fearless of mistake. Having taken into careful account the various arguments for and against assent, the understanding is fully persuaded that the only reasonable solution of the question lies in despising the objections and in giving in to the side which has the weight of argument. It is evident to the mind that, to reject the truths proposed for belief, and thereby give way to the trivial reasons of the opposing side, would be a most imprudent step and glaring fallacy. All this

is clear and manifest to the understanding and will before the command of definite assent is given, and hence the action of both faculties is in accordance with the dictates of light and reason throughout. But this is not all. Over and above the reasonableness and certainty which accompany the action of the mind in submitting to the movement of the will, special notice must be taken of the natural influences which operate potently on the will itself and incline it to move the intellect. Grace, indeed, is necessary, as we have seen, to stir the voluntary action, but it is not the only influence that prevails upon the will.

We know that good is the object of the will or volitional faculty,[16] as truth is the object of the mind and intellect. That we may obtain and enjoy good is at once the end and source of all our efforts. This is why the will is the motive power of the soul and moves us to all our actions. All our other faculties are, as it were, servants of the will, messengers sent out in quest of its object, good. The intellect discovers the object, but the will lays hold upon it and enjoys it. The pursuit of good, then, belongs to our very nature, it is the happy end and duty imposed upon us by our benevolent Creator. And if it is our duty and a necessity of our existence to seek that which is good, we can plainly see that the greater the good proposed to the will, the greater will be the desire and effort to attain it. If

[16] S. Th. 1-2ae, q. I., a. VI.

this is not always so, it is because the good in question is not apprehended by the mind in its entirety, and accordingly does not forcefully appeal to the will. But when the intelligence clearly perceives that the object presented to it by faith is the Supreme Good, the one thing which alone can fill to satisfaction all the heart's desires, the will naturally conceives the attainment of this good to be its obvious duty and highest perfection, and therefore it commands the intellect to yield the assent of faith. In thus acting, however, the will, like the intellect, is pursuing not its proportionate and connatural object, but an object which, although not inadequate and beyond its utmost extended possibilities, is supernatural in character, and consequently impossible of attainment without the help of special grace.

It is altogether clear now that the act of the intellect by which faith is given, has for its immediate and last cause the movement of the will.[17] The intellect assents proximately and directly, because the will moves it to do so. It is also clear that the action of the will in commanding the assent of faith, is not a trivial action, not a mere pious desire, it does not move merely because it is seemly so to act. No, the will to believe is the consequence of influences manifold and momentous. The motives that operate on the will are too many and too strong to be light in effect. The evident unreason-

[17] S. Th. 2-2ae, q. II., a. 1 ad. 3.

ableness of rejecting the grounds of credibility—the wisdom and veracity of God and the testimony of human history; the imprudence and absurdity of forfeiting eternal life and happiness for the sake of a few unfounded difficulties or vain fancies; the terrible consequences of resisting the voice of God, of ignoring the light, of despising God's grace and loving condescension—these are questions of moment, influences not to be despised. And yet, serious as are these considerations that bear upon the will, they do not force its action, they do not take away its venture—its hope and source of merit.

God has mercifully arranged His revelation, and the acceptance of it. Various and manifest are the signs He has given of the truth of the things He has spoken and promised. And while these signs are proportioned to the capacity and intelligence of the least of His children, He has withal left the object obscure and the vision dark. It is ever possible, as a consequence, for imprudent doubt to arise and haunt the mind, and hence the will in its choice is free.

III

THE NATURE AND POSSIBILITY OF MIRACLES

MIRACLES THE SEAL OF REVELATION

THAT the question of miracles is at all times a momentous one can be shown in many ways. It is, in fact, evident as soon as we begin to speak about the basis and truth of the Christian religion, or of any supernatural form of divine worship; for miracles are, and always have been, the means employed by Almighty God to prove to men that He has spoken or acted and that, by consequence, the facts in confirmation of which miracles are performed must be understood as divine in origin and the truth unquestionable. This is not to say that miracles must always be worked only for the purpose of confirming the truth of some particular doctrine or creed. The proximate ends and purposes of miracles may be various in kinds, provided their ulterior aim always remains the glory of God and man's instruction. But as it is to our present purpose, we wish to insist that miracles are the seal with which God has been pleased to stamp His revelation. They are the sign by which we know that we have from on high a

code of supernatural laws, a system of divine truths, a collection of unearthly promises and future rewards which, if we will, we are to enjoy beyond the grave. Running through the Gospels, we find that the Saviour frequently referred to His miracles to confirm His words, and to prove His divinity and messianic character and mission. Thus when asked plainly if He were the Christ, "Jesus answered them: I speak to you, and you believe not: the works that I do in the name of my Father, they give testimony of me" (Jno. x. 25). Again, "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though you will not believe me, believe the works: that you may know and believe that the Father is in me and I in the Father" (Jno. x. 37 and 38). (Cfr. Matt. xi. 2-6, and Luke vii. 19-23).

IMPORTANCE OF MIRACLES UNDERESTIMATED BY MODERN WRITERS

While the question of miracles is, then, a weightly one, we are not unmindful that its importance is not entirely appreciated by all who to-day write about or discuss the subject. Especially do many prominent writers fail to grasp the necessary connection between Christianity and miracles.

Some do not admit the existence of a supernatural order, and of course for them a real miracle must, by the terms, be impossible; but of those who grant the existence of a world beyond the finite, many are at a

loss to perceive just what miracles have to do with that other world, if anything at all; and again, there are increasing numbers of sincere and fervent Christians who seem unwilling to concede that the truth and divine character of Christianity are anywise dependent upon miracles. They will not allow that Christ ever based the testimony of His divinity and heavenly mission on His miraculous power and works. Even the texts of Scripture just cited, they explain away. By "works," they contend, the Saviour did not mean miracles and wonders, but referred to His whole beneficent activity. And by "beneficent activity" they wish to understand not physical but spiritual achievements; not the healing of the body, but the cleansing of the soul; not the exercise of sensible far-famed prodigies, but the enlightenment of the spirit and its deliverance from sin and death. Christianity, they tell us, needs no other miracle to substantiate its claims than its marvellous history, no other confirmation than the moral light it has shed on the world for twenty centuries, no diviner sanction than its high aims and lofty purposes, the wonders it has wrought, the slaves it has liberated, the captives it has freed, the wounds it has bound up and healed, the broken hearts it has consoled.

This method of argumentation is pushed so far by some of the present-day writers that they do not hesitate to aver that the notion of miracle may be altogether disassociated from Christianity without loss to the lat-

ter. Thus in a book on "Religion and Miracle," Dr. Geo. A. Gordan of Boston, writes: "I am concerned to show that where miracle has ceased to be regarded as true, Christianity remains in its essence entire; that the future of religion is not to be identified with the future of miracle; that the message of Jesus Christ to the world is independent of miracle, lives by its own reality and worth, self-evidencing and self-attesting." [1] From this open declaration in the preface to his book, it is plain that, according to Dr. Gordan, belief in Christianity does not depend on belief in miracles, and that, therefore, whether miracles are possible, or impossible, whether or not any have ever been performed in confirmation of the divine character of Christianity, makes no difference with the divinity and claims of the Christian religion. Christianity stands by itself, self-sufficient, and whether miracles stand or fall is quite another and irrelevant question.

Although we waive, as beside the purpose of these pages, an investigation of the truth and tenableness of Dr. Gordan's position, all must admit that the Church has been wont at all times to regard miracles as the seal and stamp of her supernaturalness—as the one real fundamental proof that her founder, Jesus Christ, was the very Son of God, a divine person, the Saviour of

[1] Geo. A. Gordan, Religion and Miracle, Boston. Cf. Also Prof. B. P. Bowne on the "Piecemeal Treatment of Christianity and Miracles"—*Homiletic Monthly,* New York, March, 1910.

the World, and that the Church established by Him is His sacred and infallible oracle. Likewise did St. Paul look upon the resurrection of Christ as the great miracle which finally set out in relief Christ's divinity, and gave to the preaching of His followers a heavenly and unfailing sanction.[2] So closely has the Church adhered through the centuries to this same belief and teaching of St. Paul that to-day it is not rare to hear her upbraided for making miracles play so vital a part in her constitution and authority.[3]

There are, perhaps, many reasons why so many writers at the present time have come to consider the question of miracles as unimportant and absurd. Science—the wonders it has brought to light, and the reputed ancient marvels it has exploded—is one cause for the disfavor into which miracles have fallen; and a misunderstanding of the real nature of miracles is another. Science, it is true, has wrought wonders in the last half-century; in a darker age many of its present achievements would have been regarded as miraculous; but if miracles be correctly understood, it can be unreservedly maintained that human science has never worked a miracle, and never shall work one; it has never explained away a miracle, and never shall be able to explain one away.

It may not be unprofitable, therefore, to enter into

[2] 1 Cor xv. 14 and 17.
[3] Lyman Abbott in *The Outlook*, Jan. 8, 1910, p. 79.

a brief consideration of the nature and possibility of miracles. If once men understand the exigencies of a real miracle, its scope and limitations, its end and purpose, doubtless much of the confusion which prevails in so many minds with respect to miracles will be cleared up, if not entirely removed.

WHAT IS A MIRACLE

What, then, are we to understand by a miracle? Something wonderful, something unusual? A strange unaccustomed event whose cause lies hidden and unknown to us? This, indeed, would seem to be the notion of a miracle entertained by many; and thus we so often hear it loosely said that life is a mystery and a miracle in many respects, that miracles and wonders are all about us—within and without us. There is some truth, after all, in this way of speaking, for if they be taken in this careless and inexact sense, it is not false to say that miracles hourly occur in the lives of all of us. A moment's reflection upon the mysteriousness of a blade of grass, or flower, or babbling brook; the wonder and meaning of our present being and varied conditions; the complex moods of happiness and sorrow, hope and despair; the impulses now noble now base, now invigorating and inspiring to high and holy action, now yielding to fear and cowardly defeat,—all these various dispositions, strange and inexplicable, arising in ourselves and pictured forth in those round

us will bear out the conviction that wonders insoluble are in our midst without number.

But this, surely, is not a serious acceptation of the term miracle. There would be no dispute, no remarkable misunderstanding of the problem if this were its meaning. Hence, by a miracle must be understood a sensible effect produced by Almighty God transcending all the powers of nature.[4] It rises above the accustomed order of things; it is an event perceivable by human senses which the forces of nature could never of themselves effect. A miracle does not, as some have said, destroy nature; neither does it interrupt and disturb the whole natural order; it is simply that in a particular instance an effect is produced by divine power which a created cause could not have produced, either by reason of the peculiar character of the thing effected, or on account of the manner in which it is accomplished.

SOME OBJECTIONS ANSWERED

Against this notion of miracle it is commonly and straightway objected that God is the God of order and not of confusion, that He has beautifully and harmoniously established the course of things created, and need not further interfere with His creation, or disturb it, or interrupt the peaceful music of its operation. To do so would imply a want of wisdom, a lack of fore-

[4] St. Thomas Contra Gentes lib. III., Cap. C.; Summa Theol. 1. p. CV. Art. VIII.

sight and plan, a mistake in the beginning. Further, since all things must happen according to God's immutable foreknowledge and will, a miracle would argue mutability of judgment, a contradiction in the very nature of God; and hence the inevitable conclusion that the order of nature is fixed and permanent, and that a miracle is an absurd fancy, an impossible idea.

The force of this objection only plays on the surface, its weight is nothing; for while we say that a miracle is a work of God, rising in its potent results above the single or combined forces of the natural order in such wise that to all it is a source of wonder and admiration, inexplicable and impossible to human, or even angelic agencies, still it must be taken into account that the order of nature admits of a twofold and most rational consideration. Since creation in its entirety is God's own handiwork, having been wrought out according to His eternal knowledge and good pleasure, it is plain that the things of nature not only bear an intimate relation one to the other, but in a special manner must they respect and be related to their cause and creator. And just as God, the author of all that is, or shall be made, has made all for Himself (it being impossible that He should act or create except for the highest purpose and with the noblest motive, and that, aside from Himself and His own honor and glory, He could conceive any end for creation containing the plenitude of perfection), in like manner, it is not possible

that a miracle should imply anything which had not been preconceived and preordained by Him. A miracle, then, while it suspends the exercise of relations which one created thing bears to another created thing, can never mean any disorder or disturbance in the plans of the Almighty—it can never take away the relation of the created to the uncreated, of the creature to the creator. God cannot wish anything in time which He has not wished from eternity; He cannot conceive anything posterior to the existence of creatures which had not been already considered in the very framing of their plan. What to mortal ken may seem to escape His providence in a limited order, fits in beautifully with His providence in a vaster sphere. The human eye is bound by the things of sense, God's wisdom sweeps beyond the skies; human knowledge is swayed by the realms of time and place, God's knowledge, stretching from everlasting to everlasting, sounds all the deeps and shoals of the eternal cycles; reaching mightily from end to end, He disposes all things sweetly.

When, therefore, it is said, according to some authors, that a miracle is contrary to the order of nature (*contra ordinem naturæ*), this does not mean it is something new and opposed to what God planned from the beginning; but only, at most, that it opposes the innate tendency and natural operation or course of some particular law of nature.[5] This truth is further em-

[5] St. Aug. De Civitate Dei, lib. XXI., cap. VIII. n. 2.

phasized when we recollect that Almighty God is the first cause and supreme measure of the nature and essence of all things; all have had their beginning in Him; He is the maker of all. And since a correct judgment of anything must be in conformity with its measure and cause (especially if the cause be omnipotent), how can it be said that that is unnatural or impossible in the order of nature, which has its source and efficiency in the cause and author of nature, and in full view of which the order and course of nature must needs have been established?[6] Moreover, if God is the creator of all things—of the wide universe and the fulness thereof—if all creatures stand in much the same relation to God as does a work of art to the artist, it follows that, just as a subsequent change or alteration in the work of art would not be impossible, or mean its destruction, so a change or suspension or overruling of the effect of a natural law does not involve any impossibility on the part of God, or on the part of creation, neither does it imply anything destructive to the general order and harmony of the latter.

THREE CLASSES OF MIRACLES

It is clear from what has so far been explained that all that is marvelous and extraordinary in a miracle arises, not from a consideration of the divine power

[6] St. Thom. Con. Gen. loc. cit.

which produces it (nothing is marvelous to the Almighty), but from the part of nature, the forces of which have been exceeded and their operation surpassed and transcended. The more the power of nature is overruled, the greater the miracle. Hence, the familiar division of miracles given by St. Thomas Aquinas—*above nature* (supra naturam), *contrary to nature* (contra naturam), and *beyond nature* (praeter naturam).[7] In the first case the power of nature is entirely and in every way surpassed, so that the effect produced could never flow from the natural capabilities of a created cause. A creature might indeed be the instrument, but its operation would be in virtue of power supernatural. Of this kind would be the glorification of a human body, or the collocation of two bodies at one and the same time in the same place. This constitutes a miracle of the highest rank.

Miracles of the second class (contra naturam) do not so utterly transcend the forces of nature. The effect produced does not in its general notion lie entirely outside the realm of natural possibilities—that is, the substance of the phenomenon effected is not in the abstract superior to nature's powers, it is only the concrete instance which rises above the forces of nature. For example, life is an effect proportioned to the laws of nature; nature has within itself the seeds of life, which

[7] St. Thom. In Dispp., De Potentia, Qu. VI., De Miraculis, art. 11, ad 3.

hourly germinate and spring into beings of varied kinds and forms, and yet, that from which the spirit of life has entirely departed, nature has not the power to revive. Again, sight is natural to man and brute; but if the nerve, the source from which it issues, be destroyed, no natural cause can ever restore it.

The third class of miracles (praeter naturam) embraces those sensible effects which exceed the possibility of natural agencies, not as to the nature of substance of the concrete instance under consideration, but in the manner or mode according to which it is effected. Thus a sudden and instantaneous cure of a severe malady would in this sense be a miracle—the manner would be miraculous, the fact in itself would not.

Summing up, then, our notion of a miracle, we may observe that, although the division herein given and explained adds to a clear and complete understanding of it, still everything pertaining to the nature of miracle is sufficiently expressed if it be simply said that it is a sensible effect of divine power exceeding and transcending, at least in some way, all the forces of nature, known and unknown. It has been shown above that, accurately understood, a miracle is never contrary to, nor a violation of, the natural order. At times it may appear to be contrary to some particular law of nature; but, as has been pointed out, even this is not exactly according to truth. For example, that a body of water should be parted for a time, as on the occasion of the

passage of the Israelites through the Red Sea, does not mean that the laws of hydrostatics are violated or destroyed. Similarly, when a stone is raised aloft in the air no violence is done to the law of gravitation which inclines the stone downward. In both these instances the natural law remains, exercising in fact all the time its native force; but under the influence of a superior power the natural effect of the law is impeded. It is the effect of the law and not the law itself which is suspended by a miracle.

MIRACLES ARE POSSIBLE

We have taken it as granted all along that God is the creator of all things. It is not our task to enter into proofs for this: all with whom we are concerned will admit it. It is, consequently, easily perceivable that God's infinite knowledge and almighty power, brought into external operation by the efficacy of the eternal will, are the conjoined and unified cause of all we see round about us, and of all that is. We understand that everything existing aside from God Himself is His own creation, the work of His hands. Nothing has come into being but by Him and through Him. Further, we see, from what has preceded, that the nature of miracle is such that its actuality would be a graceful and necessary complement of that larger and more sublime arrangement of things, called God's providence; and that,

moreover, it does not upset the order of nature which has been established, it implies no destruction of natural laws, it works no disorder in the universe. From all this it would seem that the possibility of miracles is but a natural and easy deduction. It follows as a corollary on what has been explained before. And yet, patent as this conclusion may appear, it is not entirely above question. Some difficulties are still in the background. Looking around us and taking into account the world of experience, we discover certain existing circumstances, certain conditions on the part of nature in which a miracle could not take place; some laws there are which do not permit overruling, they never fail in their effect. Reason, for instance, tells us that truth is eternal and immutable; it shows us clearly that, no matter what the wild contentions of the Skeptics, no matter what the delusions of Pragmatism, there is in this changing universe of things a class of realities superior to time and place, which have been the same from the beginning, and shall remain the same when all else is done and gone. In spite of the dreams of Hegel, entity and non-entity are eternally opposed; the notion of circle must be forever identified with the notion of roundness; the exactness of justice cannot by any law, human or divine, be made to coincide and harmonize with the violations of that virtue—these and countless other like laws can never suffer mutation.

It must be admitted, then, that besides the universal

order of God's Providence, with respect to which a miracle is impossible, there is also a class of laws entering into and regulating things created against or superior to which the Almighty cannot act. These laws, called first principles or the fundamental laws of reason, participate in the truth and reality of God Himself, and, hence, to change or suspend their natural operation would involve a change in the divine nature. True it is, God is omnipotent; nothing is hard or impossible to Him, all things yield to the sway of His power, and yet He cannot produce contradictory effects. He cannot by any stretch of His omnipotence bring it about that two and two shall equal five, that a circle shall be at once a circle and a square, that existence and non-existence shall be identical, that an act shall be at one and the same time and under the same circumstances both good and bad; God, albeit that He is infinite, cannot do any of these things, not, in truth (as wisely observes St. Thomas of Aquin),[8] because of any impotency in Himself, but on account of the impossibility of the things in themselves. God can do all things; but these are instances of nothing; they are negations of things, non-entities, and can be conceived and spoken about only through the notion of their opposites.

But excepting the fundamental laws of reason, and the immutable essence of things, all else involved in the

[8] St. Thom. Summa Theol. I. p. Qu. XXV. art. 3 et 4; Cont. Gent. lib. II cap. XXV.

work of creation is contingent and subject to change. The world and nature are not necessary existences. They need not have been at all, and as the great Creator freely called them into being, He was free to make them after this manner or after that; they might have been entirely different from what they are, and, having a different nature, their mode of operation would be correspondingly different. The very existence, therefore, of the finite is contingent; it may be, or it may not be; and, if it exists, its actions and operations will be in accord with the nature which the creator has freely given it. God, on the contrary, is the Infinite, the Necessary, the Absolute. His nature and existence are from everlasting necessarily one; He is dependent on no cause; He is His own being; His attributes emanating from His infinite nature and one with it, are infinite in character; of unlimited knowledge, His powers are likewise without measure. In creating these contingent orbs—this finite universe—God has not, as Spinoza and Leibnitz would have us believe, exhausted His creative resources. He might have made numberless other and better worlds than this. And thus from the absoluteness of God on the one hand, and from the contingent nature of the world on the other, the possibility of His rising superior to any of nature's laws (in which consists the miraculous) follows obviously.

GOD CAN ACT THROUGH OR INDEPENDENTLY OF SECOND CAUSES

There is still a further consideration. According to the threefold division of miracles before explained, we have seen that those of the second and third classes (contra naturam et praeter naturam) are not in their absolute concept beyond the forces of nature; objectively, they are possible to nature, while in the particular instance in which the miracle is found they transcend all natural possibilities.

An example will again illustrate this: medicine has of itself the power of assisting nature to recover from illness—animate beings have within them the principle of life by which through generation they are enabled to beget other living beings—life produces life, force begets force, energy communicates energy—all this according to natural law; but that lost life or health should be restored in an instant without the use of natural means goes beyond nature's powers. Moreover, as no created being has of itself its nature and existence, but must primarily receive them from the Omnipotent Creator of all, so no creature has of itself independently of a preceding first cause the virtue by which it lives and acts; as it is constituted a being by a participation in the being and entity of God, in like manner does it exercise its vital faculties by a participation in that power

which has its source and fulness in God alone.[9] All the utmost capabilities of the finite are but shadows of the Infinite, all that creatures can effect is the result of borrowed strength. It may, therefore, please God to work out His eternal designs by the mediation of those creatures He has called from nothingness into being, or at His pleasure He may attain in time His wondrous ends by setting aside that virtue already communicated to secondary causes, and calling into play something of that infinite reserve of power which He must ever enjoy but can never entirely delegate.

God, then, can produce instantly and without delay of time the effects proportioned to secondary causes without the intervention of those causes. He is able, if He choose to do it, to go a step farther, and produce effects in every way superior to natural capabilities; and this, as has been shown, constitutes a miracle of the first rank. If it were possible to conceive that God in creating the universe has displayed the fulness of His power; that is to say, if we could conceive the Infinite as becoming finite, as having reached a limitation in the manifestation of His ability to do and to create, then would it be clearly absurd to think about the possibility of miracles; it is nonsense to suppose a new display of power already exhausted. But since, as has been said, the Infinite, by His very nature, must be of resource inexhaustible, it is not hard to see that, so long as He

[9] Zigliara, Propaed. lib. I. cap. XXI. n. VI.

St. Albert's College Library

does not contradict Himself (an impossibility), there can be no difficulty in the possible overrulings of the laws of nature. He can act through the creatures He has made; He can put aside their ministration, and call up other and nobler creatures to do His will; or, when it is more to His liking, He can dispense absolutely with the causality of the finite and attain His desired ends and purposes by other infinitely varied and more excellent ways.

IV

THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL

THE DIFFICULTY OF THE QUESTION

ONCE, while propounding his views of immortality, Dr. Lyman Abbott was asked, by a member of his audience, if brute animals have souls. He replied: "I do not think so, for a creature incapable of faith and love cannot have a soul."

It must have been rather disappointing to those at all acquainted with the time honored and profound teaching of the great philosophers and ancients regarding the soul, that Dr. Abbott, a gentleman otherwise scholarly and clever, should have given so unsatisfactory a reply to so vital and pertinent a question. Perhaps it was his intention to ignore in this particular the authority of the thinkers of the past as being obsolete and unequal to the problems of the present. This is often done by modern writers, but never without greater or less disaster. The common reader may not conceive it so; but in the world of science a writer who does not know, or who disregards the psychic teachings of Aristotle, Plato, Socrates, Augustine, and the long line of scholars

that followed in the footsteps of these ancients, is not regarded worthy of serious consideration. No matter what the discoveries and progress of modern science, no matter what the extravagances of rationalism, the greatest thinkers that have ever lived cannot be ignored with impunity.

It is not as if the subject were plain and ordinary, open and subject to the views and reasonings of everyone with a little learning; no, the question of the nature and future condition of the soul is a grave and serious one. It is not easy of solution. The soul of its very essence is, as it were, afar off and obscure to our understanding; it is difficult of access, and hard to conceive; it eludes our senses, and baffles our usual modes of knowledge, and can be approached only indirectly, as from effect to cause. Hence our views upon the nature and immortality of the soul are to be reckoned according to the authority with which we speak, and the profundity and truth of our reasonings.

It is not the purpose of the present article to be a copy or collection of the opinions and doctrines of the great philosophers, ancient and medieval, respecting the immortality of the soul; but only, while not deviating from the path of the masters, to point out and explain the main psychic arguments upon which the belief in immortality may be reasonably and substantially established.

NATURE AND PROPERTIES OF THE SOUL

In order to speak intelligently of the incorruptibility or immortality of a soul, it is necessary first of all, and as far as possible, to set before our minds a clear conception of the nature and properties of a soul. No question, however trivial in itself, is capable of proper treatment, unless he who would treat it is able clearly to define its limits. Much less is it possible that a question, of which the author has no definite conception, can be intelligently and satisfactorily comprehended by his readers or hearers. If we set out with obscurity and confusion, it is only natural that we should end in greater confusion. A soul, therefore, is the first and primary principle by which a thing lives, moves, and acts; or it is the underlying source and fountain of life, thought, and intrinsic action in all those things, be they human, animal, or vegetable, in which these vital attributes are found. Any being, then, or any entity which lives and moves, whether by conscious or unconscious movement, whether its movement be intelligent or instinctive, is said to be endowed with a soul. From this it is evident that not only human beings possess a soul, but also animals and plants,—every living creature from the highest intelligence to the simplest shrub that grows. The differences, so vast and varied, which we perceive in various living beings is the result and, to a certain extent, an explanation of

the different principles that vivify them. Hence the vegetative soul, which, in plants and trees, and all insensible living things, is the source only of unconscious life and motion, greatly differs from the sensitive soul which is the principle of animal life, sensibility (feeling), instinct, and a certain unintelligent and limited consciousness in brute animals. As the sensitive soul is far more perfect than the vegetative, so an animal in the order of nature is a being of vastly greater perfection and capabilities than the mere plant. All note this striking difference, even though they do not understand, or admit that its source is the principle within. But between the vegetative and sensitive souls, and the intellectual principle in man there is a difference still more notable. The soul of man rises to a far higher plane of being. If not in the same degree, it contains all the virtues and properties found in the souls of animal and vegetative life, and is gifted in addition with intellectuality.

There is nobody who does not know that man has within him an intellectual principle which is called his soul, and yet there are not a few who do not understand that this intellectual principle must by reason of its intellectuality be spiritual and incorruptible. The connection between intellectuality and spirituality is not sufficiently plain to all to demonstrate that he who has an intellect must by consequence have a spiritual and immortal soul. To show this connection we need only

briefly examine the psychic operations which proceed from man. With the soul itself we cannot directly proceed; for while the soul is the seat and source of man's life and action, of his intelligence and sensibility, thought and feeling, it does not act, directly and immediately, but indirectly, as through the medium of the senses, and its spiritual faculties. We feel, we hear and see, we taste and smell by means of the senses, but we think and understand, remember and exercise our will not directly by the soul, but through its faculties, the intellect, will and memory. It is by these faculties that the soul exercises its highest and noblest operations and functions,—distinguishing and elevating itself above all other things of earth,—becoming like to to the nature of angels, and it is through these same lofty operations and properties that we arrive, as by an indirect method, at a knowledge and understanding of the nature of the soul of man. This has been the process of all the great philosophers, and it is the only natural way by which we can enter the sanctuary of the human soul. The classic axiom says that we know the nature and essence of a thing by its proper operations; that is, by those operations which are particular and distinctive of the thing that operates. It is not, therefore, every act elicited by a being that determines its specific nature. Thus man elicits many acts, he is the subject of a multitude of different operations sharply distinguishable one from the other: he feels and thinks,

reasons and vegetates; and yet not by each and all of these actions is he strictly distinguished as a man. The plant vegetates and grows, and the animal is capable of feeling; but neither plant nor animal can think or reason. The power to think and reason is peculiar to man; and it is only by these and similar acts that we are able to recognize in man a principle vastly different from that which animates other living creatures.

INTELLECT AND WILL INDICATE IMMORTALITY

But from the operations of the intellect and will which flow from man's specific nature, and manifest him an intellectual being, how does it follow that he must possess an immortal spirit? We already understand in part that the specific acts of a creature indicate and specify the nature of the source or principle from which they proceed, but we do not see how these acts in the case of man argue the spirituality or immortality of his soul. A slight investigation will show it. Let us then briefly examine these specific operations. That they are spiritual in character appears at once when we reflect that the objects with which they deal, or at least with which they are capable of dealing, are spiritual objects. Perhaps this is not at first quite plain; but, whether it be that all our knowledge comes to us by way of the senses, as most philosophers contend, or that we are born with certain innate ideas and conceptions, it is at any rate beyond doubt that, from

the material objects which confront the senses, the intellect abstracts those immaterial and universal ideas and notions which furnish its knowledge. I see a horse, a tree, or flower, and my mind at once and unconsciously gathers from this particular sensible object of color, form, and shape, a general and universal notion of horse, tree, or flower. Under the particular material object perceived by the senses the intellect conceives the universal nature which is participated by the object before the senses and applicable to every other similar object. Once conceived, the idea is stamped upon the intellect in its pure abstract universality, so that, though the same object never again meets the senses, the mind can understand it, reflect upon it, and reason about it. The process is the same in regard to every material object apprehended by the senses; but the mind in its range of knowledge is not confined within the limits of sensibility. Its sweep is over a far vaster field. Starting with those things which strike the senses, it ranges from the humblest form of matter into the highest regions of abstraction and spirituality. It can understand to a great measure things purely spiritual, entirely independent of time and space, and of the material creation. It can reason about and designate the nature and attributes of souls separated from the body, of angels; and even the nature of God, surpassing all understanding, falls in a limited way within the domain of its powers.

Now from these capabilities of man's intellect, inadvertently realized every moment, we come to know the existence and nature of the human soul, precisely as a spiritual principle. Behind the intellectual faculty which can rise in an instant from the things of matter and sense to the realms of entire abstraction and purest spirituality, we perceive there must be a spiritual source, greater naturally than the faculty proceeding from it. If the soul, through the intellect, can deal with things spiritual, then it must of necessity be spiritual in its own nature. A stream cannot of itself rise higher than its source. The ear can never perceive color, nor the eye sound, simply because these senses, like the other faculties, cannot exceed the limits of their nature. In like manner brute animals, though wonderfully endowed with those instinctive tendencies which make for their own well-being and that of their kind, can never rise above material objects. Of all things, then, in the order of nature, the soul of man alone, ranging over the universe, seeking its end and perfection in myriad wondrous ways and forms, fixing its hopes and aspirations in regions of perpetuity and immutability, proves that it is of a nature unlike the limited changing things of earth.

Allowing, therefore, that man is endowed with a soul spiritual in character it follows by an easy and natural consequence that it must also be incorruptible or immortal. Death is nothing more than the separation of

matter and its principle of life. If any material thing that lives can remain forever united to that which gives it life, whatsoever it may be called, that thing can never die. It is the going out of the spark of life, the departure of the vivifying source from plant, animal, or man that brings on the calamity of death. If, then, the principle itself of life and action be itself free from material elements and not dependent upon the matter it vivifies, if it shows by its operations that it is superior to all time and place, how can it ever succumb to dissolution; how can it die? Science, indeed, does not know, reason cannot tell. As far as we know, as far as the greatest thinkers have been able to determine, a being, such as we have described, once put into existence must live on forever. But some one may say, there are other ways perhaps, unknown to us now, by which a spiritual being of its own inclination will finally enter the portals of death. We do not know all the secrets of life and death; mystery darkens upon mystery, the human mind is unable to penetrate the gloom, and hence the spirit itself, and last of all perhaps, will yield to "dusty death."

THE TESTIMONY OF MANKIND

It is very true that many things exist which we know not, and many more which we do not understand and cannot explain. Nature is replete with wonders too extensive and too intricate for our comprehension; but

after all, we know something; we have certain knowledge regarding many things, and in view of the vast unexplored fields which ever deepen before us, we must be humble. Because we do not know all mysteries we must not fall into the absurdity of skepticism and doubt about everything; we should be content with what we already know, and hold fast to it, while moving on to what we do not know. It would be to no purpose to discard what we have, what we are sure of, while seeking that which we have not, and perhaps can never get. The human reason, so keen, so penetrating, so unfailing in its final universal judgments, wrought up and perfected through all the ages, has told us by the mouth and pen of the most eminent philosophers in all times that the spirit within us is like to angelic, that it defies the trammels of time and space, that it mocks the idea of death and dissolution and seeks in immortal life an incorruptible throne where it is to reign without end.

ALL MEN DESIRE IMMORTALITY

Following upon the knowledge and dictates of the human intellect the next most potent reason for the belief in the immortality of the soul is the universal desire of mankind at all places to live forever. This does not, however, form an independent argument; it is but a consequence upon that presented by the nature of our intellectual operations. The will, or source of our desires is a blind faculty; it follows in all things the

guidance of the intellect. We can have no desire for that of which we have no conception. For those singular and unknown treasures which lie concealed in sea or mountain, or in the depths of the earth, we have only the most general and indeterminate wish, because our knowledge of them is only general and vague.

But setting aside the intimate connection between our desires and our knowledge, and insisting solely upon our will and its volitions, philosophers tell us it is impossible that so far reaching, so universal, and vital a desire as that of the human heart for immortality, should be vain and unfounded. Nature, they insist, never acts in vain; *i. e.,* the great natural impulse and instincts in man or brute are not and cannot be false; they must have a definite and certain meaning founded upon the reality of things; they must be possible of realization. To what purpose should the all wise Creator implant in the bosom of man the impulse and desire to conserve and perpetuate himself in life, if this were utterly impossible, or never to be realized? Why should man be worn and tormented with passion for wealth, power, and position, if there be no such thing as ever attaining to their acquisition? If, like the pangs of a burdened unrepenting conscience, they are ever haunting us, and can never be banished, never be satisfied, and put to rest? In the same way, and with more reason may we ask the cause of the ceaseless surging longings of the soul, of those impassioned desires for

that higher and nobler life which we find not here below? For that state of perfect happiness and rest from toil and pain and sorrow? Whence these insatiable cravings for a life in which we can realize all our noblest dreams and hopes in immortal unblemished youth and vigor? There must be such a state which awaits us, else our life is a dream and our hopes and longings vain and useless!

It cannot be doubted that, by exercise of the intellect and imagination, one may construct scenes of impossible pleasure and happiness, if not in an absolute sense, perhaps in a relative and restricted one, inasmuch as the things one may fancy lie outside one's personal reach. One may picture to himself a fair state of life, with health and wealth, and length of days; with peace from without, and joy within; with all the charms of home, of beauty, love and devotion unmarred by frown or care; or again, as in time of buoyant ecstatic exultation, when the tide of life is at its flood, and youth and strength, and grace of figure appear to crush and still the pangs of nature, one may wish the impossible; that the day of life, so fair, so sweet, so full of choicest good, might linger on forever. It is true, that these and such like ideal and enchanting conditions of life often cast a longing lingering spell about the human heart, and, in some instances, lead it captive for a time; but never in the history of man have they been recognized as constituting an essential and universal desire

of human nature. On the contrary thousands upon thousands of souls in all ages have despised these passing fitful pleasures and comforts of life in view of the immortality for which they looked and hoped beyond the grave. Joy and sorrow have alike been reckoned as naught in comparison with the glory of immortality. There is no desire so universal and essential to human nature as that of living, here in this time, and hereafter, forever. Even those who, by a careless and negligent life, manifest no strong wish for future unending existence do not the less ardently desire it, if only they could be assured of its certainty. The desire, strong, yes stronger than life or death, is there, but doubt and uncertainty muffle its cry.

MAN'S PERFECTIBILITY REQUIRES THAT HE BE IMMORTAL

Many worthy writers have been persuaded of the immortality of the soul by the perfectibility of the human intellect. Considering that the mind, or intellect of man can never attain, during the years of this life, to its adequate perfection; that, at the close of a long life, the intellect of the cleverest and most extensive student has but started on the way of its perfection; that, in fact, to reach the fulness of its perfectibility, the spirit of man would require an eternity of existence, the ablest psychologists have concluded that the soul must be immortal. All other beings save man

can find in this world the fulness of perfection which their nature demands. They have their day, they run their course, and cease to be. Unless, then, we say that man, the climax and crown of the natural order, is in the end the greatest failure of all things created, we cannot evade the conclusion of the immortality of his soul.

This beautiful argument might be much further developed, but since it would ultimately resolve itself into what has already been said in reference to the operations of the intellect and will, it is not our purpose to dwell longer upon it. We offer our humble thoughts upon this sublime subject to the consideration of our readers, and trust they may give some solace to the doubting uncertain mind, and pluck from the heaving breast of grief something of the sting and sorrows of death. The body—this mortal clay, which the spirit quickens, will of necessity yield to decrepitude and decay, and be resolved into its elements; but the soul, strong, immortal, and imperishable as when it came from the hand of God, shall live forever.

AN EXAMINATION OF KANT'S FUNDAMENTAL TEACHINGS *

INTRODUCTORY.

It may be said without fear of opposition that no one has done so much to color and shape the current of modern thought as Immanuel Kant. Men may not agree with him, at least as to the totality of his system; schools may rise up against his teaching as against one whose pernicious purpose was to shake the foundations of thought and overturn the intellectual achievements of the ages, and yet, unconsciously as unwillingly, many even of his opponents have been swayed to think and act as he thought and did. Vigorously opposed especially by the followers of Scholasticism, his influence has nevertheless been so widespread as to mold the philosophic thought of almost every other school. His philosophy laid the foundation for Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, and Schopenhauer in his own country; it was

* The citations to the *Critique of Pure Reason* in this article are taken from the Berlin Academy Edition and from the English translation by Meiklejohn. In the references to the former the Roman numeral refers to the volume, the Arabic to the page. The references to Meiklejohn's translation are enclosed in brackets.

the inspiration of the Agnostic School from Hamilton to Spencer in England; and in France it gave birth to the Positivism of Comte and the neo-Criticism of Renouvier. Nor has the influence of Kantism been confined to the field of philosophy. It has made its way into theology, and is in reality the basis of most of the contemporary religious thought now prevalent outside the Catholic Church.

It is the aim of the present chapter to expose and examine the salient features of Kant's philosophy as expounded in the *Critique of Pure Reason.* His critical philosophy is divided into three distinct portions, the Critique of Pure Reason, the Critique of Practical Reason, and the Critique of the Faculty of Judgment; but as Kant's philosophy stands or falls on the merits of the Critique of Pure Reason, which purports to be a critical examination of all our scientific knowledge, the doctrines of the second and third Critiques may be reckoned as of little value until the true worth of the first is clearly established.

In fact, Kant himself maintained that the whole purpose of philosophy was to give answer to three questions: What can I know? What ought I to do? What may I hope for? And he further held that the answer to the first must precede and regulate the answers to the second and third.

It will, perhaps, be of service to a better understanding of our subject to observe that Kant's intellectual

career is commonly divided into two periods, the pre-critical, extending from his twenty-third to his fifty-seventh year (from 1747 to 1781), and the critical, which embraces the remaining twenty-three years of his long, laborious life. At the age of sixteen he entered the University of Königsberg, where for six years he applied himself to the study of Wolff's philosophy and Newton's physics. On leaving the University he spent nine years as tutor in several distinguished families, and then returned to the University of Königsberg, where for fifteen years he filled the position of a licensed but unsalaried teacher. At the end of this period of service he was appointed to the chair of philosophy in the University of Königsberg, which he held until 1797, seven years before his death. The whole pre-critical period was a time of indefatigable labor, during which he profoundly considered all the great problems of the physical sciences and ethics. The philosophy taught by Kant during these years was the modified, dogmatic rationalism of Wolff, which he had learned as a student, and which at that time was the prevailing philosophy of Germany. In accordance with the principles of Wolff's philosophy he made reason the basis and test of all knowledge and metaphysical truth. Toward the end of the pre-critical period, however, Kant's faith in reason as the basis of all metaphysical knowledge began to weaken. Disturbed on the one hand by the apparent contradictions

which he discovered in the physical sciences, and by the skepticism of Hume on the other, he determined to call to account all human experience. In this way he hoped to solve the difficulties thought to exist in the natural sciences and to place the truths of metaphysics on an unquestionable foundation. According to Kant's own words it was Hume who first interrupted his "dogmatic slumber, and gave his investigations in the field of speculative philosophy quite a new direction." [1] It may be well here to recall the chief features of Hume's philosophy.

Hume was a radical empiricist. For him experience was the one universal rule of philosophical procedure. He subjected all knowledge to the criticism of experience. He denied the substantiality of the mind, holding that what we call mind is simply a "heap or collection of different perceptions united together by certain relations, and supposed, though falsely, to be endowed with simplicity and identity." [2] Locke had explained away everything except substance and the primary qualities of bodies. Berkeley did away with these, and finally Hume completed the work of empiricism by denying even the substance of the mind, leaving only phenomena. Consistent with his doctrine regarding the mind, he explains causation as nothing more than a succession of relations between our ideas; and these

[1] *Proleg.* Berlin ed., IV., 260; Carus translation, 14.
[2] Cf. *Works,* I., 534.

relations, moreover, are not *a priori,* but gathered from experience. Repeated experience, argues Hume, shows us that whatever event has a beginning must have a cause, and hence *a posteriori* we conclude that an effect must have a cause. The dependence, therefore, between cause and effect is not ontological, but psychological—engendered in our mind by repeated experiences, and reason, accordingly, is unable to conclude *a priori* any necessary connection between cause and effect. Hume did not deny the utility of the concept of cause, but he did contend that it could not be conceived *a priori* by the reason, and that consequently, it possessed no *inner truth independent* of all experience in virtue of which its application could be extended beyond the objects of experience. In short, the principle of causation must not be extended beyond its source; if the concept of cause originates with experience, its use and application must be confined to the things of experience; but if it could be shown that it has its origin *a priori* in the reasoning faculty, then naturally it may be extended beyond the objects of sense.

Now it was this empirical solution of the principle of causality, as Kant tells us, which gave a new direction to his own speculations. It awoke in him the belief that the old *a priori* dogmatism of Wolff had put too much stress on the part played in our knowledge by the reason, while the empiricism of Hume had gone too

far in the opposite direction, by making experience the sum total of all possible cognition. To get at the happy medium in which the truth was to be found he determined to subject all knowledge to a severe criticism in order thereby to ascertain how much of it is *a posteriori,* or from experience; how much *a priori,* or transcendental. Kant's philosophy is called a transcendental criticism precisely because it is an attempt to determine chiefly the *a priori* forms of all human knowledge.

I. EXPOSITION OF THE CRITIQUE OF PURE REASON

Starting, then, to analyze the principle of causation, Kant tells us that he soon discovered "that the concept of the connection of cause and effect was by no means the only idea by which the understanding thinks the connection of things *a priori,* but rather that metaphysics consists altogether of such connections." [3] By determining these *a priori concepts,* which he found to be many, he was able to bound and designate the entire scope and content of the field of metaphysics. For, according to Kant, metaphysical cognition is *a priori* knowledge coming from the pure understanding and pure reason, and hence by its very nature it abstracts from all empirical sources.[4] Its principles can never be derived from experience of any kind, whether inter-

[3] *Proleg.* l. c.
[4] *Proleg.* Berlin ed., IV., 266; Carus translation, 14.

nal or external, and this not only for that it deals solely with *a priori* concepts, but for the further reason that metaphysical knowledge must be universal and necessary—properties which experience is altogether impotent to supply. This brings out the Kantian distinction between *a priori* and *a posteriori* knowledge,—the former, being metaphysical, is characterized by universality and necessity, while the latter, as based on experience, is of a particular and contingent nature. Since then, we possess knowledge which is strictly necessary and universal, it is evident to the mind of Kant that our knowledge, in its entirety, is not confined within the borders of experience, as Hume would have us believe; but that, on the contrary, we can boast of real *a priori* cognition which constitutes the basis and principles of metaphysics. It must be noted, however, that Kant held that all our knowledge begins with experience. Here are his own words: "All our knowledge begins with experience, but that it all originates *from* experience by no means follows. It may well be that experience itself is made up of two elements: one received from impressions of sense; the other supplied by our faculty of knowledge on occasion of those impressions; an element added by the mind to the material furnished by the senses, an *a priori* element, an element independent not only of this or that experience, but of all experience and anterior to it." [5] It

[5] *Crit. of Pure Reason,* III., 27; (1).

is also needful to bear in mind that Kant maintained that knowledge is the result of the action of the intellect on objects, and not vice versa. Rightly understood, this is correct, but not in the sense in which Kant meant it, as we shall see presently.

In general Kant distinguishes a twofold object of cognition: phenomena and noumena. Phenomena are the appearances of things, the sensible representations of objects as pictured to us by and through our senses from the world of experience.[6] Noumena are the substantial realities underlying these sensible appearances, or phenomena, and are the proper objects of intellectual and rational activity. Phenomenon is the external appearance of the thing which strikes the senses, noumenon is the thing in itself (das Ding-an-sich). The subjective faculties by which we acquire knowledge are three, according to Kant: the senses, or sensibility (Sinnlichkeit), which is the power of receiving sense-impressions, or sensible representations of things, called phenomena or empirical "intuitions"; the understanding (Verstand), or faculty of knowing *a priori* by which the perceptions of phenomena are regulated and unified; and reason, or the reasoning faculty (Vernunft), by which the rules of the understanding are in turn regulated and reduced to unity.[7] The critical examination of the knowledge coming to or acquired

[6] *Crit. of Pure Reason*, III., 50, 202, 212; (21, 156, 165).
[7] *Crit. of Pure Reason*, III., 237, 239; (189, 191).

by us through these three faculties is the burden of the *Critique of Pure Reason.*

KANT'S CRITICISM OF SENSE KNOWLEDGE

In order, therefore, to determine with regard to each of these three faculties of knowledge what is *a priori,* or transcendental, Kant finds in each species of knowledge, sensible, intellectual, and rational two distinct elements: the one a material, the other a formal element. Hence all knowledge is made up of matter and form. The material element, that is, the matter or content of knowledge is that which comes from experience, the form or formal element is that by which knowledge is determined to this or that particular kind. The form is given *a priori,* independently of all experience, arising solely from the activity of the knowing faculty.[8] It is, indeed, the application of form to matter which alone makes experience possible.—So much as to the material and formal element of knowledge in general. But each of the three kinds of knowledge just explained has its own particular matter and form. The matter or content of our sense-knowledge is phenomena, or sensible representations of things existing about us in the world of sense; the formal element consists of the two subjective forms of time and space which, anterior to all experience and innate in the sensitive

[8] *Crit. of Pure Reason,* III., 100; (69).

St. Albert's College Libr

faculties, are the conditions of all sensation.[9] The form, then, of sense-knowledge is *a priori* and altogether independent of anything objective in the realm of experience; moreover, these subjective forms of time and space are imposed by the mind on the material element of sensation first, in order to render sense-perceptions possible, secondly in order to make them universal and necessary. All our sense-perceptions, therefore, according to Kant, are mere representations of phenomena—representations which manifest the qualities of things *not as they are in themselves,* but according to the *innate subjective forms* which precede all actual sensibility. These representations are consequently dependent on our sensitive faculties, and would be different if our faculties were otherwise constituted. The fact that all men with normal senses perceive the same phenomena in the same way comes not from the uniformity of the objects perceived, but rather from the uniformity in construction of our faculties.[10] Again, Kant would have it remembered that although these *a priori* forms of time and space make possible, regulate, and render universal and necessary all sense-perceptions they are not to be extended outside the narrow range of the senses; they are meaningless beyond the data of sensation, *i. e.,* the appearances (Erscheinungen) of things.

[9] *Crit. of Pure Reason,* III., 50; (21).
[10] *Crit. of Pure Reason,* III., 55, 59, 65; (25, 59, 35).

KANT'S CRITICISM OF THE FACULTY OF JUDGMENT

We now come to the knowledge acquired through the understanding or faculty of judgment, with which, according to Kant, intellectual cognition really begins. The sense-representations (sense-intuitions) which result from the imposition of the *a priori* forms of space and time on sensible objects constitute the material element of intellectual cognition.[11] The senses intuite, the understanding reflects on the intuitions of the senses, coördinates and reduces them to states of clear "consciousness" called judgments. Some of these judgments are contingent and particular, others, which only are proper objects of philosophical speculation, are necessary and universal. Now as was the case with sense-knowledge, so here with judgment, universality and necessity must come *a priori*. Experience is at all times and in every instance unable to supply these attributes. That, then, which gives universality and necessity to our judgments exists *a priori* in the intellect, or faculty of understanding, and is imposed by the intellect on sense-intuitions in a similar manner and for a similar purpose as the *a priori* forms of space and time are imposed on phenomena. This formal element of intellectual cognition comprises twelve *forms* termed *categories*.[12] Although undetermined in regard to any

[11] *Crit. of Pure Reason*, III., 93; (62).
[12] *Crit. of Pure Reason*, l. c.

object these *categories* or functions of judgment are calculated not only to give universality and necessity to the operations of the understanding but to guide and direct it in the formation of all its judgments. Being purely logical functions inherent in the nature of the understanding prior to all experience, they do not afford the least concept of an object aside from experience. They require sensible perceptions as a basis and are useless for any other application, hence they do not extend our knowledge, they relate only to the appearances of things, and tell nothing about the noumenal reality underlying those appearances.[13]

Attention must be called right here to Kant's well known *synthetic a priori* judgments. It is well to remember that his division of judgments comprises two classes: *a priori* and *a posteriori* judgments, and secondly those called *analytic* and *synthetic*. As already said, by *a priori* judgments he means those which are formed from pure concepts without any reference to or dependence on experience, except in a material way, inasmuch as the notion of the subject and predicate may come from experience; for example, "every change must have a cause." Thus the fact of a change we know from experience, but that it is *always* and *necessarily* connected with a cause we know only *a priori*. When the connection of subject and predicate is known only from experience, and is by consequence contin-

[13] *Crit. of Pure Reason*, l. c.

gent and particular, as, "John runs," the judgment is *a posteriori.*[14] An *analytic* judgment is one in which the predicate is contained in the notion of the subject, as, for example, the judgment, "all bodies are extended." In judgments of this kind the predicate adds nothing to the notion of the subject; it only explains by a different term what is expressed by the subject, hence there is an identity of meaning between subject and predicate, as can be seen from a simple analysis of each. But the reverse is the case with synthetic judgments. In a synthetic judgment the predicate, not being contained in the notion of the subject, but, on the contrary, being something which no analysis of the subject could have ever disclosed, really augments the significance of the latter. Thus "all bodies have weight" is a synthetic judgment, because "weight" is an idea not essentially bound up with the idea of body; it is a contingent addition to the notion of body.[15] So far it would appear that Kant and the Aristotelian philosophers are on a common footing; but Kant goes on to observe that while all analytic judgments are *a priori,* synthetic judgments are sometimes *a priori,* sometimes *a posteriori.* A judgment is "synthetic a posteriori" when the predicate is not contained in the subject, and when the nexus, between the two, as being the result

[14] *Crit. of Pure Reason,* III., 28; (2).
[15] *Crit. of Pure Reason,* III., 33; (7).

of experience, is not necessary but contingent as in the proposition, "John Smith is wealthy."

A judgment is "synthetic a priori" when its predicate is not contained in the notion of the subject but when the nexus, or linking together of subject and predicate is necessary and universal, for example, "every effect has a cause." Judgments of this kind are *synthetic,* says Kant, because the putting-together (synthesis) of the subject and predicate is the result of experience,—the ideas of cause and effect are not connected because the idea of one is contained in that of the other (as the Aristotelians would contend), but only because it is a matter of experience that the one is not found without the other. Further, this sort of judgment is *a priori,* because the universality and necessity which it involves must come from the understanding independently of experience. Experience can give us only contingent and particular data, and hence the universality and necessity which characterize "synthetic a priori" judgments can have no other source than the pure concepts of the understanding. Therefore, the proposition, "every effect has a cause," expresses a judgment which is, first "synthetic," because the subject and predicate are not intrinsically connected, but associated through experience, secondly, it is "a priori," because the pure concepts of the understanding have endowed it with universality and necessity.[16]

[16] *Crit. of Pure Reason,* III., 35; (8).

Nearly all the judgments which constitute science are "synthetic a priori," according to Kant. These only, in fact, enter into true science, because in these alone is found the two-fold element requisite for scientific judgment: they are necessary and universal in their application and veracity; and moreover they are of such a nature as to add to knowledge, since the predicate always enlarges upon the notion of the subject. Analytic judgments, he holds, do not contribute anything to knowledge, although they may give clarity to our conceptions. And "synthetic a posteriori" judgments have no scientific value, since, depending as they do entirely on experience, they are always particular and contingent. To the "synthetic a priori" judgments only, then, can we have recourse for knowledge truly scientific, but even these are useless beyond the realm of phenomena; of noumena, or things in themselves they tell us absolutely nothing.[17]

KANT'S CRITICISM OF THE FACULTY OF REASONING

The third part of the *Critique of Pure Reason* is occupied with an examination of the reason, or reasoning faculty together with the knowledge acquired through it. It is the office of the reason to order and reduce to unity the concepts and judgments of the understanding, which concepts and judgments make up its material element, or content. The form of rational cogni-

[17] *Crit. of Pure Reason,* III., 207, 231; (161, 183).

tion Kant places in three "norms," or "ideas" existing *a priori* in the mind. The function of "ideas" in the rational faculty is similar to that of space and time in sensation, and that of the categories in the understanding.[18] These three ideas correspond to the three distinct operations which Kant finds in the reasoning faculty: the categorical, hypothetical, and disjunctive operations of reason. The categorical reasoning is based on the category of substance and accident, and leads to a certain absolute subject that cannot be predicated of any other, and this constitutes the "ego" or psychological idea. Hypothetical reasoning, resting on the category of cause and effect, leads to the notion of the dependence of all singular, contingent things upon a certain totality, and this is the idea of the world, or cosmological idea. Disjunctive reasoning rests on the category of mutual action and leads to the idea of absolute unity of all realities, which is the idea of God, or Theological idea. These three ideas as being made up of purely subjective elements, do not represent anything outside the mind "in rerum natura." Their one purpose being to direct the mind in its reasonings, they constitute a *norm* by which the mind is able to know and to reason within the limits of experience; but by them or through them nothing can be known, nothing concluded beyond the range of phenomena.[19] There

[18] *Crit. of Pure Reason*, III., 239, 241; (191, 192, 193).
[19] *Proleg.* Berlin ed., IV., 350 ff.; Carus trans., 120 ff.

is in us, Kant admits, a certain necessary and natural inclination to extend the use of these ideas beyond the realm of sense to noumena, or things in themselves, and this especially with respect to the nature of the human soul, the world and God. But this tendency of our nature, he urges, is an error, a vain delusion. These ideas are to regulate our knowledge of the things of experience, and nothing more.[20] By yielding to our natural desire to extend them beyond the sphere of experience we fall into lamentable errors: false conclusions about the nature of the soul, cosmological contradictions, and sophistic Theological reasonings. The office, therefore, of true philosophy, in Kant's opinion, is to discover these errors of pure reason and help us to guard against them.[21] Truly the natural impulse of the human mind to pass from phenomena to noumena, from the things that appear to the things that are is inevitable and unchangeable like nature itself, and yet Kant warns us that this is a vain and deceptive tendency. Nature and reason, it would seem, are false and erroneous at the root.

One must not, however, infer from the foregoing reasoning that Kant did not believe in a spiritual soul in man, the reality of the material universe, and the existence of God. He simply maintains that we cannot prove these things, that as realities they must ever re-

[20] *Crit. of Pure Reason*, III., 349; (288).
[21] *Crit. of Pure Reason*, III., 234 ff.; (186 ff.).

main unknown to us. His position in this regard is a logical conclusion from his principles already explained. The senses are the source and ground-work of all our knowledge, and they do not go beyond phenomena. So far as the objective reality of things is concerned understanding and reason are unable to go beyond the data of sensation. That there is within us a spiritual principle destined by the force of its nature to survive the body, that the world about us is no sham but a substantial enduring reality, that there is outside and above this perishable world a supreme, though, as far as speculation can tell us, an unknowable God,—all this, Kant concedes, we may believe and hope but can never prove. In view of such doctrines it is not difficult to account for the origin and progress of Agnosticism, and of the general skeptical tenor of modern philosophic thought.

SUMMARY OF KANT'S TEACHING

From this exposition of Kant's philosophy his aim throughout the *Critique of Pure Reason* is clearly manifest. His chief purpose, as against Hume, is to vindicate "certain ingredients of our knowledge as belonging to mind, not to matter; to the subject not to the object; to the understanding, not to sensation; to the *a priori*, not to experience." [22] And yet, as has been repeatedly observed, Kant insists that these *a*

[22] Max Müller, *Science of Thought*, p. 144.

priori concepts, or laws of thought must never be applied outside the limits of sensuous experience. All our objective knowledge is phenomenal. The nature of objects considered in themselves, and without reference to the receptivity of our sensibility, is quite unknown and unknowable. Our own peculiar mode of perceiving appearances is all we can lay claim to. Noumena really exist and sustain the phenomena that appear, but that is all we know about them.[23]

To the question, now, which Kant set out to answer, whether, namely, we can know anything of those things which transcend experience; and, by consequence, whether metaphysics is at all possible, he would reply: (*a*) We can know nothing beyond the phenomena of objects that come under the senses; as to noumena, or the realities underlying phenomena they cannot be denied to exist, but what they are we can never know; (*b*) Metaphysics, as a science, is altogether impossible, and this for the reason that it consists of transcendental truths to which pure reason is unable to attain; (*c*) that we should attribute objective validity to our transcendental concepts is a natural delusion.

Stopping with the conclusions thus reached in the *Critique of Pure Reason,* Kant's doctrine evidently leads to open skepticism, so far at least as respects the world of reality. He undertook a thorough criticism of all human knowledge, not to destroy or tear down,

[23] *Crit. of Pure Reason,* III., 65; (35).

bnt with the sole purpose of determining what part or how much of it had a footing *a priori,* and he ended by overthrowing, (to his own satisfaction, at least), the possibility of proving by speculative reasoning those truths which, before his time, had been considered most sacred in the range of knowledge. But Kant did not consider his efforts destructive, especially when regarded in the light of their final issue,—far less did he wish to be stigmatized as a skeptic in any sense. What he took away from the realm of speculative knowledge he endeavored to restore to humanity by having recourse to Practical Reason.[24] The truths which, through his *Critique of Pure Reason,* he had deprived of all metaphysical moorings he tries in the *Critique of Practical Reason* to establish and vindicate on an unshakable moral foundation. The dictates of the Practical Reason, and the force of the inner written moral law are a supreme criterion of truth unto every man. By his practical reason man discovers this moral law, and, by consequence, his personal moral obligation. To this moral obligation, called the "Categorical Imperative," three truths, says Kant, are necessarily presupposed: the liberty of the human will, the immortality of the soul, and the existence of God. Without liberty there would be no merit in hearkening to the voice of conscience; without another, enduring life,

[24] *Crit. of Practical Reason,* Berlin ed., V., 132; Abbott trans., 229.

law would be lacking its proper sanction; without God virtue would frequently go unrewarded, vice unpunished.[25] Hence these truths are, as it were, preambles to the moral law, they pave the way for it, they solidify its basis, they contribute to render it that unquestionable bulwark of truth and sanction which make its dictates supreme, imperative, and universal. It is in virture of this employment of the practical side of pure reason, that Kant says we may have *belief* in the supersensible. While insisting on the rights of both faith and knowledge, Kant's critical philosophy carefully distinguishes the domain of the one from that of the other; knowledge rules in the phenomenal order, but faith in the noumenal.

This appeal to the practical reason may sound very well, but we must not be deceived, as apparently Kant was; for the practical reason must presuppose the pure reason, if its dictates are to be more than mere assumptions.

II. CRITICISM OF THE CRITIQUE OF PURE REASON

So much for a general exposition of the teachings found in the *Critique of Pure Reason.* With these salient features of Kantian philosophy before us, it will be interesting to apply to his teaching something of his own method, by subjecting it to the test of criticism. For this purpose it is not at all necessary to go

[25] *Crit. of Prac. Reason,* l. c.

minutely into detail, nor to give here all the arguments, multitudinous as they are, which can be leveled against the seer of Königsberg. It will be sufficient to hold up to light a number of his most glaring fallacies.

In the first place it would seem that any philosophy, any teaching, which rejects truths at all times and by all men admitted as certain and above question; and which, on the contrary, holds as true that which all are by nature wont to deny,—it would seem, that such a philosophy cannot be other than false and absurd. And yet, as has been seen, Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* is a philosophy of this kind. All its conclusions, as he elaborated them, are opposed to the common consent of those who preceded its author, as well as to the natural judgments and dictates of the human mind. Almost on its face, therefore, it merits rejection. For what can be more preposterous than to believe that all the sages of antiquity, and all the men of genius and learning down to the time of Kant were deceived and in error regarding the most fundamental and momentous questions of philosophic thought and investigation. "It is human to err," but human nature is not intrinsically erroneous. Moreover, the very things which Kant denies, as well as those which he affirms, fare thus at his hands without sufficient reason; his contentions are wanting a foundation; his position has not a valid

justification even in itself,—it is arbitrary and gratuitous, as will become clearer as we proceed.

ERRONEOUS TEACHING REGARDING SENSE KNOWLEDGE

Kant is quite Aristotelian in his teaching that the senses are the gateways of our knowledge. That there is nothing in the mind which is not in some way the result of sensation is axiomatic in the schools of sound philosophy. Human knowledge always begins with the senses. He is also quite right in allowing that the mind is able to generalize upon the contingent impressions received from particular sensible objects, thereby constructing the universal and necessary laws which govern science and lift it above the variable, singular objects with which it deals, but in assigning the source whence springs the possibility of such universality and necessity, Kant goes woefully astray. Unlike the Aristotelian he does not find running through the various classes of singular things which confront the senses a universality of nature and necessity of law which, as a foundation, give to science its invaluable character and unfailing sanction; but on the contrary, seeing in the objective world only particularity and contingency, he has recourse to a vain, groundless fancy as the basis of science. Knowing that science must be universal and necessary in its certainty, and being unable to discover these qualities *a posteriori* he concludes by an astonishing assumption that they exist as forms

a priori in the mind. Space and time, then, which are the two great regulating conditions of all phenomena, and which impose on the raw material, so to say, of our knowledge the qualities that constitute science, have no existence outside the mind except as applied to objects by the mind, but are *innate, a priori* mental forms. Not only is proof for this contention wanting, but the reasons which led Kant to it seem so devoid of common sense, let alone sound reason, that one is tempted to disregard his whole system as an idle dream—a novel fiction unworthy of serious consideration.

KANT'S ERRONEOUS VIEW OF THE FACULTY OF JUDGMENT

A similar treatment merits Kant's "synthetic a priori" judgments, on which he seeks to base his whole system, and, in fact, all scientific knowledge. Thought and real knowledge, according to Kant, begin with judgment; but only that kind of judgment can be the source of knowledge truly scientific which at once amplifies and extends our knowledge, while imparting to it stability and certainty. This is effected, he teaches, only by "synthetic a priori" judgments: analytic judgments remaining within their own concepts do not enlarge upon the notions they express, while *a posteriori* judgments are unable to furnish the qualities which science must possess. So he reasons. By arbitrarily restricting the meaning which has always attached to

analytic judgments he formulates a new class calculated to answer his purpose. In the first place he jumps at the conclusion that an analytic judgment is one whose predicate is convertible with its subject and thus lacks the quality of expansion; and secondly, being unable to discover any intrinsic, necessary and universal connection between subject and predicate in those synthetic judgments which are otherwise suited for science, he gratuitously conceives that these qualities of universality and necessity are supplied extrinsically by *a priori* mental forms. His whole difficulty arises from a misconception of analytic judgments. For this kind of judgments it is only necessary that by a simple analysis of subject and predicate these be found to agree or disagree, and that either because the predicate is contained in the notion of the subject, (as when we say, "man is an animal"); or because in our analysis of the terms we discover a reason why one should be attributed to the other. Thus in the proposition, "the world has been created by God," we find on analyzing the subject "world" that its contingent and limited nature are inexplicable apart from the predicate, "has been created by God." Synthetic judgments on the other hand are those in which, from a simple analysis of the terms, we could never associate them, their connection or bond of union being entirely a matter of experience. Given this correct understanding of analytic and synthetic judgments there is clearly no room

or demand for Kant's middle class, "synthetic a priori." The example he gives to prove their existence only serves to show his own erroneous notion of the two classes admitted by the followers of Aristotle. For example in the proposition, 7+5=12, Kant insists that no analysis of 7+5 will ever convey the idea of 12. It is only, he says, a blind synthesis, born *a priori* in the mind which gives a necessary and unfailing connection between 7+5 and 12. Here it is plain that Kant was more concerned with the symbols than with the concepts expressed by them. If we consider the ideas conveyed by these sensible signs 7+5 and 12, the position of Kant seems absurd. In fact the very contrary of his conclusion is the obvious one. For the most simple analysis of the meaning of 7 and 5 makes it clear to the mind that, when united, they signify a quantity or number identical with that expressed by the symbol 12. The sensible figures count for nothing aside from the meaning they give out, and hence when one clearly understands the idea which 7 and 5 expresses, and the further idea expressed by the figure 12, he at once perceives they are one and the same,—that one is entirely contained in the other. Therefore the association of the concepts expressed by 7+5 and 12 results from their respectively intrinsic significance, and not from any extrinsic or *a priori* source.[26] If, however, we attend, as perhaps

[26] Cf. Hugon, *Logic*, 126.

Kant did, to the mere symbols 7+5 and 12, then we may say that it is only by experience and custom that the particular arbitrary signs of 7 and 5 have come to be associated with the other arbitrary sign 12. Kant's mistake evidently comes from confounding the origin of the association of the sensible signs with that of the ideas. Because of the identity of their meaning the ideas have a necessary connection, while the symbols expressing them are associated only because common consent of men has decided that the arbitrary signs 7 and 5 should when united, signify or be equal to the arbitrary sign 12.

Take another example. In the proposition, "this world had a beginning," Kant admits that there is a necessary connection between the predicate, "had a beginning," and the subject, "world"; but as usual he assigns no reason for it other than an innate mental necessity whereby we are compelled, so to say, to connect these two concepts. And since his position is purely gratuitous, it may be denied without hesitation. Truly there is between the extremes of this proposition, that is, between the concepts expressed by the extremes, a necessary connection, and that for reasons intrinsically objective. On looking into the nature, structure, and composition of the object which is called "world," it is at once evident to the mind that such a contingent, changing thing as it is, could not have been from everlasting, independent and self-existing,

and therefore must have "had a beginning." In short, we analyze the subject and predicate and find an intrinsic bond between them. The same process discloses the intimate connection between subject and predicate in that other Kantian example, "everything that happens has a cause." This is an abstract and general proposition, and yet the very fact that a thing happens, or takes place, or is effected or produced (these are all synonymous terms), is a proof that it has not within itself the reason of its existence and is, therefore, dependent on something else for its existence, which is to say it had a cause.[27] The very examples, then, which Kant adduces to illustrate his "synthetic a priori" judgments prove, (since they are in fact illustrations of analytic judgments), that his new division or class of judgments is without a basis or a reason, and consequently that his fanciful theory about *a priori* forms which he calls categories, excogitated to supply extrinsically an element which these judgments already possess by force of their own intrinsic nature, falls useless to the ground. He is wrong in his outset, and the farther he proceeds and the more hypotheses he formulates, the more does he become involved in error. That this is the case is proved by a glance at his theory respecting the knowledge acquired by the reasoning faculty.

[27] Cf. Hugon, *l. c.*

KANT'S CRITICISM OF RATIONAL COGNITION IS UNWARRANTED

In treating of the elements of rational cognition, Kant, as has been shown, asserts the existence of three kinds of ideas innate in the mind: the idea of self or the "ego," the idea of the world, and the idea of God. Nobody wishes to deny that we have in our minds these distinct ideas; but that, as Kant maintains, they exist *a priori* in the mind, and are for the sole purpose of regulating our empirical knowledge, is one more mere assertion unsupported by the slightest argument. Equally groundless is the supposition that these transcendental ideas, not born of any experience, cannot, nevertheless, be extended beyond the range of our experience. As to their existence, we are told they are entirely independent of experience, but for their use and application they are strictly limited to experience. And why? What is the reason for this? Granted that all our knowledge begins with the senses, why cannot the mind afterwards transcend sensibility? Why must it forever remain within the limits prescribed by the data of sensation? That it must be so is Kant's supposition. This is his starting point. This it is which has given rise to the *a priori* fabrications which he places in sensibility, understanding, and reason respectively. And hence all subsequent explanations of his *a priori* forms Kant treats in a manner suited to fit in with his philo-

sophical dream. He started with a dream, and he is determined to dream on, logically indeed, to the end. It seems beside his purpose to take into account any difficulties that may be connected with his system,—none, in fact appear to have occurred to him.

Again it may be asked why there is within us, engraven in our nature, a mighty and irresistible desire to extend these transcendental ideas of God and the human soul beyond the order of phenomena? Can it be that a desire so universal and constant is but a vain delusion? Is human nature in error, and Kant alone right? Hardly so. At least a sound mind is rather inclined to accept the uniform and noble promptings of man's nature in preference to the wild assertions of one troubled brain. But the extension of these ideas outside the pale of experience leads to a whole network of antinomies the most lamentable, Kant replies. As a matter of fact these antinomies or contradictions are born of Kant's own ignorance, or self-deception. An equivocation lies at the bottom of all his antitheses. For example "The world has, as to time and space, a beginning," *i. e.,* it is limited (thesis)—"The world is, as to time and space, infinite," *i. e.,* it is limitless (antithesis).[28] His conclusion here is that the world is at once finite and infinite. It is finite, since it had a beginning in time and space; it is infinite because it may be indefinitely extended and prolonged as to space and

[28] *Proleg.,* Berlin ed., IV., 338; Carus trans., 104.

time. In the first place, one is a little confused to hear Kant talking this way in regard to space and time, since he holds as one of the corner-stones of his system that space and time are mere mental forms having no objective existence or essence, save as applied here and now by this or that mind. However, granting the objectivity of space and time for his present purpose, we may solve his difficulty by simply calling attention to the fact that there is not the remotest contradiction between a thing having a beginning and no end. Because a being is to endure indefinitely is in no wise repugnant to its having had a beginning. The human soul has been created in time, and yet, being spiritual in nature, is destined never to have an end. Where is the antimony here? Kant has confused the idea of indefiniteness with that of infinity. Infinity means limitlessness, without beginning or end, and hence there is but one infinite being, God.

Another example of Kantian contradiction: "There are in the World Causes through Liberty"; "There is no Liberty, but all is Nature."[29] Let it be noted, before examining this antimony, that one of the chief ends of Kant's labors was to defend human liberty, for on it he grounded the great Moral Law, the certainty of whose existence was to his mind beyond all question. In liberty he found the sanction of this law, and consequently man's freedom and responsibility were as

[29] *Proleg.*, l. c.

certain to him as the existence of the phenomenal order. What, then, does he mean by "nature"? Nature in itself is not necessarily opposed to liberty. It is natural to man to be free. It is a part of his nature. Therefore by "nature," which would be opposed to liberty, he perhaps wishes us to understand necessity. Yes, this is his meaning, for he says, "All the actions of rational beings, so far as they occur in any experience, are subject to the *necessity* of nature; but the same actions as regards merely the rational subject and its faculty of acting according to mere reason, are free." [30] And by "necessity of nature" he means the determinability of every event in the world of sense according to constant laws, that is, a reference to cause in experience. Now, if this means anything, it is that every sensible event (effect) has a cause, "nature" demands so much; and this law of nature remains whether the actions of rational creatures proceed from free choice or election, or whether they are elicited without regard to reason. "In both cases the effects are connected (with their causes) according to constant laws," and this is what is meant by natural necessity. But when acts proceed from rational agents according to reason, that is, freely, "it is reason," says Kant, "which is the cause of these laws of nature (he would better have said, reason fulfils or verifies these laws of nature), and (is) therefore free." If the actions

[30] *Proleg.*, Berlin ed., IV., 343 ff.; Carus trans., 111 ff.

are not determined by reason, "they are subjected to the empirical laws of sensibility, but reason is not therefore determined by the sensibility, and hence is free in this case too." Now the upshot of all this abtruse, unwarranted line of reasoning is that freedom and necessity both exist in the world, each controlling its own domain unimpeded by the other. Where, then, is the real antinomy or contradiction? According to Kant's own reasoning it does not exist.

KANT'S INITIAL PRINCIPLE IS A GRATUITOUS ASSUMPTION

Kant has generally been given the credit of having conceived and elaborated an eminently architectonic system of philosophy in so far, at least, as he brought it to completion. The novelty and logic of his reasoning have been highly extolled. To the majority of the present age, who follow him so blindly and are so imbued with his principles that all their thoughts and writings are Kantian in tone and tendency, it does not seem to occur even in the remotest way that his wonderful system is, in its very outset, based on a contradiction. His initial principle is that no truth, no knowledge is to be admitted until the faculties by which it is acquired have been rigorously subjected to criticism. Be it remembered that criticism of all our knowledge and knowing faculties is the keystone in his imposing philosophical edifice. And of "pure rea-

son" this is especially to be observed.[31] This is the whole aim of the *Critique of Pure Reason,* and yet he undertakes his gigantic task presupposing (as he must if he would ever make a start) the unquestioned veracity of the dictates of that pure reason. It is plain, then, that he wishes to except from criticism or question the reliability of the initial dictates of pure reason. So much he needed as a basis on which to start, and with this beginning, gratuitous or contradictory (it is one or the other), he proceeds to establish the following conclusion: "Pure reason divested of all experience has no objective validity." Again we look in vain for proof of this conclusion; but passing over here as elsewhere the absence of proof as one of Kant's habitual failings we may presume to ask if he really means that at least this his dogmatic conclusion has any objective worth? Is it merely something subjective appealing to Kant alone (if so it need not cause anybody else any concern), or is it something objectively true so that every one who wishes to be on the side of truth must hold it. The latter is obviously the sense in which it is to be understood. There is then something, even according to Kant, which has objective truth, independently of Kant or any other particular individual. This is consoling; but how does Kant arrive at the conclusion that *this his fundamental conclusion* is objectively certain? How can he prove, or

[31] *Crit. of Pure Reason,* IV, 9, (XV).

whence does he infer it? Surely not through the senses, since they are impotent to deal with the problems of pure reason. This conclusion must, then, be an inference of pure reason independently of the senses and experience; but the conclusion itself is that "pure reason divested of experience has no objective validity"; that is, pure reason at once has and has not objective validity.[32] Here we have Kant in an open contradiction. He would reply, perhaps, that pure reason has objective validity in drawing the conclusion that "pure reason divested of experience has no objective validity," but in every other deduction pure reason has no objective worth apart from experience. Some such reasoning as this would suit his purpose and help him out of the difficulty, and without doubt he would have called it into service, had he been pushed to the wall. But although it is the only refuge to shield him from an overwhelming difficulty, it is absurdly groundless. If pure reason, independent of experience, has any objective meaning or validity in one instance, why not in every instance? If it can deduce a valid conclusion in one case, why not in all similar cases? If it is freed from the trammels of sense as to one of its inferences, why should it be enslaved by them in all others? As much warrant, (to say the least), have we to assert the objectivity of all our ideas, as Kant has to assert the objectivity of one and deny it of all the rest.

[32] Cf. *Lepidi Elem. Phil. Christ.*, 1, 350.

KANT'S PHILOSOPHY LEADS TO SCEPTICISM

Kant's main purpose in writing his philosophy was, as has been explained, to refute the skepticism of Hume and place human science on a firm and unshakable basis. His was to be the only really sound and uncontrovertible system so far excogitated by the mind of man; it was to be logical, unanswerable, high above all errors. Lofty his aim and tireless was his toil,—fascinating, to himself at least, the prospect of his life's work. With all his acuteness he did not even suspect the presence of the baneful errors that pervade his entire system of thought; he would have revolted at the suspicion that the outcome of his philosophy was also skepticism, yet so it is. Skepticism is inevitable to any one who pursues to their logical conclusions the fundamental teachings of Kant. Thus did Fichte, one of Kant's most illustrious disciples, end in idealism, (another name for skepticism), as a result of pushing to their logical conclusion the principles of his master.

To be convinced that the philosophy of Kant terminates inevitably in skepticism, we need but call to mind and examine carefully the purport of his final, grand conclusion,—that, namely, we can know nothing beyond phenomena. He insists throughout that all our knowledge is necessarily restricted to the *sensibilia* which strike our senses in one way or another; of things in themselves—the realities underlying phenomena, we

can know absolutely nothing. Phenomena alone have for us objective validity. This is Kant's reiterated plain teaching. But if we are true to his principles and examine closely the process of reasoning by which he established this conclusion, it falls out logically that even our knowledge of phenomena is not at all objective,—that phenomena, like noumena, so far as we can know, at any rate, have no objective worth. This is not to imply that Kant makes the whole external world a sham. No, he does not wish to be considered an idealist, for he holds fast to the reality of phenomena. He persists in declaring that the world of sense is an objective reality, and that it is supported by an underlying reality called noumena; but just as he denies the possibility of our knowing anything of the real nature of noumena, so, conformably to his principles, ought he to hold that we do not and cannot know anything of phenomena beyond the mere fact of their existence. All our sense-impressions, he tells us, are nothing but appearances of things which represent objects not as they are in themselves, but according to the mode in which these objects affect our senses. But these appearances, or representations, as we have seen, are dependent on the senses, that is, on the *a priori* forms of sensibility, so that, were our innate subjective forms, which precede and regulate all sense-perceptions, otherwise constructed, these appearances would be other

than they are.[33] Given different subjective faculties, or, which amounts to the same, different *a priori* forms which alone render experience possible, and all our sense-perceptions would be entirely different. From this it is evident that, according to Kant, our perception of phenomena does not depend on the phenomena perceived, but rather on the *a priori* sense-forms which make possible and govern all empirical knowledge. Hence it follows that all the knowledge which Kant allows as possible to us—a knowledge of phenomena—is entirely subjective, dependent on forms innate in the mind anterior to all experience, and whether the phenomena rendered possible by these forms really exist outside the mind as pictured by the same forms in the mind, we do not and cannot know. Indeed how could we know, if Kant's reasoning is correct? What means of assurance have we that the color or shape existing outside our senses is in exact conformity with our subjective impression of it, since the latter is entirely regulated by and dependent on something subjective and altogether distinct from the object perceived? And if this is so, what is to save us from pure subjectivism and pure idealism? What is there to stay our despair of ever attaining any knowledge really and truly objective, of phenomena as well as noumena? Thus in harmony with Kant's principles, we should hold that all the knowledge which is possible to man is bound up

[33] *Crit. of Pure Reason*, III., 55, 59, 65; (25, 59, 35).

within him as in a prison, and whether or not there is anything outside him in the objective world corresponding to the impressions and perceptions which he possesses, he is unable to say, he cannot know. As to a uniformity of perception among all men,—the fact that all, or the majority, perceive the same objects in the same way counts for nothing as to the objectivity of their perceptions, so long as these perceptions, or the forms which mold and make them are products *a priori* of subjective faculties. To be consistent it should be said that the uniformity of perception is due to the uniformity of subjective forms, and not to the uniformity of the phenomena existing without. But more, Kant's principles must logically deny to him all knowledge of a uniformity of perception among all men. How could he know this except by allowing the objective testimony of his senses, which, as has been shown, are entirely enslaved by *a priori* forms.[34] All this is especially emphasized against Kant, if we further remember that for him formal truth does not consist in a conformity between the mind and the object it perceives, but in conformity of our knowledge with itself.[35]

To eschew these undesirable yet necessary inferences from his principles and teaching, perhaps Kant would explain that, since the inborn subjective forms of time

[34] Cf. Farges, *Études Philosophiques*, 4c ed., v., 72.
[35] Cf. Farges, l. c.

and space are for the sole purpose of determining, regulating, and making possible all our sense-impressions, they have been preordained and predestined, (by whom he knows not), to be of that exact and peculiar nature and construction which makes their own creations (sense-perceptions) exactly correspond to the sensible objects (phenomena) existing in the objective world. In other words, the forms of all sense-perceptions exist *a priori,* independently of every thing objective, these forms create and shape and make possible all our phenomenal impressions (sense-impressions), and yet there is perfect agreement between these subjective impressions and the objective phenomena they represent because the latter have been *made to order* to fit the former, (or vice versa, if this would please Kant better). In the light of this novel solution of the problem one can see, (though he may fail to understand), how our sense-perceptions have objective validity, and how consequently, we may have a true knowledge of sensible objects or phenomena. This is a noble specimen of the efficiency of a lively imagination; it shows something of the power and unlimited extent which that faculty is capable of when unrestrained and allowed to roam at large. At any rate it would follow, according to Kant's own teaching, as we see, that, since our sense-perceptions depend on our sensitive faculties, if these faculties were to undergo a change, or had been otherwise constructed, the phenomena of the world would

likewise have to be changed and rearranged in order to have perfect harmony between them and our perception of them.

This sounds rather specious even if ludicrous; hence for the sake of a little further argument, let it be entertained as the only means of explaining Kant's position. Immediately arises the question, on what grounds does Kant deny the possibility of our acquiring a knowledge of noumena, or things in themselves? If there is something really existing objectively in the phenomenal world which to a nicety corresponds to the *a priori, made-to-order* types existing in our sensibility, and concerning which we have real knowledge (the only knowledge we do or can have, according to Kant), on what authority, and by what rules of consistency does Kant maintain that of noumena, or things in themselves we cannot have real knowledge—a knowledge equal in certainty and completeness to that which we possess of phenomena? Have we not as much reason to believe that the knowledge which our intelligence frames of the objects of pure understanding is as real and as comprehensive as that given us by the *a priori* forms of sensibility? Is that object which we see and understand by the mind less real, less understood than that perceived by the senses according to forms, not dependent on the sensible object perceived, but innate in sensibility? Over and over again Kant admits that the human mind in its sweep ranges far beyond the things

of sense and experience,—he repeatedly owns, as has been observed before, that there is engraven "in our nature an indomitable tendency, an insatiable desire to probe beyond the world of time and space to learn what lies hidden in that vast unknown"; and yet withal he makes bold to aver that this expanse of power, these wild desires that haunt the human heart are fruitless and vain, impossible of even the faintest satisfaction. Here as elsewhere he does not prove his claim, he merely states it, as consistent with his initial principle that the senses are the measure of our knowledge, and so leaves it unsubstantiated by a single further argument. That noumena exist is certain, but what they are must forever remain a mystery to us. His words are: "Objects of the understanding are granted, but with the inculcation of this rule which admits no exception: that we neither know or can know anything at all definite of these pure objects of the understanding, because our pure concepts of the understanding as well as our pure intuitions extend to nothing but objects of possible experience, consequently to mere things of sense, and as soon as we leave this sphere these concepts retain no meaning whatever." [86]

KANT'S LINE OF REASONING INCONSISTENT

From this, and from his entire line of reasoning, it is evident that Kant's mistake is that of one who, hav-

[86] *Proleg.*, Berlin ed., IV., 315; Carus trans. 76.

ing begun with a false principle and laid a faulty foundation, does not discover his error, but continues on adding mistake to mistake and fallacy to fallacy unmindful and regardless of the accumulation of absurdities to which his method leads. For this reason, if for no other, one is as justified in denying his groundless assertions, as Kant himself is in affirming them. If Kant admits, (as he must do, if we have any knowledge at all really objective), that the *a priori* forms of sensibility have been made to order to represent exactly the phenomena of the world, or, if he prefer it, that the phenomena of the world have been made in order to correspond with the *a priori* forms of our senses, he should, to be consistent, allow that noumena likewise have been made to correspond to the pure concepts of our understanding, so that there is an exact agreement between noumena and the concepts which exist *a priori* concerning them. And further, it being once admitted that our pure concepts have objective validity, whether by reasons of made-to-order concepts, or made-to-order noumena, there remains no reason why the intellect may not rise above all things connected with the sensible order and take hold on objects purely spiritual, thus enriching its store of knowledge from the spirit-world as well as from the realm of sensibility.

It comes to this, then, to be at all in harmony with the principles of Kant's philosophy, we must hold, either

that all knowledge truly objective, whether phenomenal or noumenal, is impossible of attainment, contenting ourselves with pure subjectivity and skepticism, or that the knowledge which we possess, or seem to possess of noumena is as real and as full of meaning as that which we have of phenomena. We have both or neither, we may not consistently admit the one and reject the other. Let the disciple of Kant think the matter over and make his choice.

12893 204
C14

F 14
F

12893 204
C14
Callan, Charles J.
AUTHOR
What is Faith and Other Essays
TITLE

DATE LOANED	BORROWER'S NAME	DATE RETURNED

St. Albert's College Library